

**MYSTICAL SYMBOLISM IN THE HYMNS OF BABA FARID, GURU  
NANAK DEV (AS IN *SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB*) AND THE SELECTED  
POEMS OF BULLEH SHAH AND WARIS SHAH**

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## ABSTRACT

The study, **“Mystical Symbolism in the Hymns of Baba Farid, Guru Nanak Dev (as in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*) and the Selected Poems of Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah”** is a thorough analysis of the development of spiritual thought from the advent of Punjabi poetry to the *Qissa* Period. There is a strong impact of the Sufi and *Bhakti* movements on the poetic works of the poets. Their works depict a change in the Sufi thought from *Ijadist* Sufism (reflected by Baba Farid) to the later Sufism (reflected by Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah). Guru Nanak Dev forms a link between the two with his Sikh-*panth*. The study is an analysis of the symbols and their connected meanings in the selected works. The poems are set against the background of the rich colour and music that infuses the culture of Punjab, the state to which the poets belonged. The poets through symbols reveal the process by which one can be united with the Supreme Lord. The symbols have been taken from nature and from day to day life. The symbols of a bride (the soul/ seeker), Husband/ beloved (master or Lord), spinning wheel (meditation), swan (Holy person), boatman and sea (master and life), Nectar or wine (Holy Name), and *Anahad Naad* or unstruck melody (repetition of the Holy Name) are some of the major symbols in their writings. Some of the ideals highlighted in their works are the importance of a *pir* or master, the repetition of the Holy Name which is the elixir for all the sufferings and a complete surrender to the Lord. The concept of *unio mystica*, which shows the phases of spiritual transformation through the experiences of union, separation and reunion of the seeker, has been applied to the works of Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah. A comparative study reveals the differences in the concept of Grace and also the development of the idea of Love projected in the selected works. Love has supremacy over all spiritual practices in the works of Bulleh Shah. The love depicted is based on his personal experiences and his relationship with his master. In Waris Shah’s *Heer*, the legend of Heer-Ranjha is used to depict the master-disciple relationship. Guru Nanak Dev Ji emphasises the love of the seeker for the Guru. For Baba Farid the strict adherence to *Sharia’t* and following the duties of a true Muslim, are of utmost importance. The *Baramaha* (Song of the Twelve Months) which is one of the techniques in folk poetry, has been used in a unique way by all the four poets. Baba Farid makes a mention of a few months in his verses. Guru Nanak Dev and Bulleh Shah depict a change in the condition of the soul over the time of twelve months. Waris Shah depicts the deteriorating condition of Heer during the period of separation through the symbolic presentation of the *Baramaha*. The contribution of each of these poets has been assessed. The works of these four poets laid the foundation of Punjabi Literature. Music plays a key role in their works. Guru Nanak Sahab made use of a number of traditional *ragas* of Hindi music in his

verses. Bulleh Shah's *kafis* are sung even today by *qawwals* to highlight the yearning of the soul. Their teachings gave comfort and succour to the people of Punjab during troubled times. The *Shahmukhi* script popularised the use of Punjabi language in the poetic works. With the invention of the thirty five letters of the *Gurmukhi* script by Guru Sahab the Punjabi language got its written form.

Punjabi literature is the outcome of numerous influences and cultures reflecting multicultural and multilingual characteristics. The analysis of the selected works, on the basis of "Mystical Symbolism" has brought a much better understanding of the mystical experiences of the four poets as well as their works.

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## **Chapter I**

### **Mystical Symbolism and Love in Poetry**

“He who has no light in his heart, what will he gain from the festival of lamps.”

— Wasif Ali Wasif

Since times immemorial the nature of man’s spiritual experience has been a matter of great speculation. Many attempts have been made to analyse and understand it. However no definite answer on even what it comprises can be given. Any experience beyond the reach of the five senses is full of enigma and cannot be easily expressed. All religions of the world have their own distinct way of describing this experience of the Divine. As noted by researchers like William James, Bernard McGinn and others, mysticism is the “direct consciousness of God”, through the experience, intuition or instinct of the mystic. The feeling of ecstasy, the tears of joy, an urge to dance to the music of the soul, and even the experience of listening to the internal sound are some of the mediums through which the greatest mystics of the world have shared their experiences of the Divine.

The term ‘mysticism’ has its origin in Neo – Platonism. It was derived from the Greek word *mystikos* which means ‘to initiate’. This meant the initiation towards spiritual truth and experience. In philosophy as stated by the “Catholic Encyclopaedia”, mysticism refers to the “desire of the human soul towards an intimate union with the Divinity.” (Sauvage, Web) John Davidson giving an assessment of mystical experience he expounds it as: “It (mysticism) is something that person lives, not a philosophy or doctrine which is read or studied. In its broadest sense, it is an expansion of normal consciousness, an awakening of hidden potential such that understanding beyond that of human reasoning and mental activity becomes inwardly manifest.” (Davidson, 3) In simple words William James suggests that, “There are two lives, the

natural and the spiritual, and we must lose the one before we can participate in the other.” (James, np) Going by James’ suggestion for a person to relish the spiritual state, the natural has to be lived in such a way that he is able to participate in the spiritual fully well. Annemarie Schimmel, in her book *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* also attaches the element of mystery to her definition of mysticism. She states that, “(It is) something mysterious, not to be revealed by ordinary means or by intellectual effort.” (Schimmel, 3) The attributes of mysticism thus revealed can be: the feeling of unity of the self with God, the desire for which has to be initiated in a person and an experience which is beyond the understanding of logic and reasoning.

The experience of the divine can be traced through different ages and times in the history of mysticism. While analysing the history we see that moments of spiritual realization have repeatedly occurred in the lives of a number of great mystics; from India, Persia, and all over the world. Men and women with higher spiritual consciousness have felt the moments of awakening, of inner joy and bliss. As Swami Abhayananda points out,

Throughout succeeding ages, these announcements were echoed by others who had experienced the same realization: “I am the Truth!” exclaimed the Muslim, al-Hallaj; “My Me is God, nor do I recognize any other Me except my God Himself,” said the Christian saint, Catherine of Genoa. And Rumi, Jnaneshvar, Milarepa, Kabir and Basho from the East, and Eckhart, Boehme and Emerson from the West, said the same.” (Abhayananda, 2)

With the absence of the written records of the mystical experiences of earliest times it is somehow difficult to trace the beginnings or assess the experiences of the people of past civilisations. But the symbols depicted in the artefacts of the earliest ages reveal the knowledge of the ineffable concepts of the perception of the Higher Power in the people. In the context of Ancient Indian Civilisation John Davidson points out that the earliest Dravidian population prayed to the combined power of *Shiva* (the Absolute Being) and *Shakti* (His world-manifesting

power) and the Aryan tradition called it by the name of *Brahman* and *Maya*. The earliest written records are found in the form of ancient extant Indian sacred texts the four *Vedas*- *Rig Veda*, *Sama Veda*, *Yajur Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. The *Vedas* are said to have evolved while *Brahma* in deep meditation narrated his spiritual experience to his four disciples, the *rishis* Marichi, Atri, Angiras and others. But it is believed *Brahma* was just a vehicle to bring forth this truth which had existed even before the creation of this universe.

The definite time as to when the *Vedas* were written is not known but from the language of the earliest *Rig Veda* it can be deduced that it was written around 1500 BC. The *Vedas* comprised a collection of songs or hymns associated with a number of deities. These were sung on particular occasions and there were rituals which followed the singing of these hymns. The *Upanishads*, which also form an essential part of the *Vedas*, provided a philosophical understanding of the rituals and delineated the real essence of the *Vedas*. The understanding of *sat-asat*, relation between *atman-brahman* and communion with One Supreme Soul have been adequately stated in the *Upanishads*. Caroline Spurgeon summarizes the teachings of the *Upanishads* from a Western perspective and states:

The mysterious ‘secret’ taught by the *Upanishads* is that the soul or spiritual consciousness is the only source of true knowledge. The Hindu calls the soul the ‘seer’ or the ‘knower’, and thinks of it as a great eye in the centre of his being, which if he concentrates his attention upon it, is able to look outwards and gaze upon Reality. The soul is capable of this because in essence, it is one with *Brahman*, the universal Soul. (Spurgeon, 15)

The *Upanishadic* mysticism opened the avenues for the quest of the highest self. It reflected on the concept of the inner experience by which the duality of soul and God could be dissolved. The ideas associated with the *Upanishads* also had a profound effect on the social life of India. It is because of the concepts of *Atman* and *Brahman* highlighted in this text that society learnt to respect all living things.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan wrote, “From the beginning, India believed in the superiority of intuition or the method of direct perception of the supersensible to intellectual reasoning.” (Hindu Wisdom, Web) The *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and also the *Bhagavad Gita* are the most significant works of Indian philosophy and literature and these depict the efforts the seeker has to make on the spiritual path. The two epics form the very foundation or the roots from which Indian literature has evolved till date. The religious and mystical significance of the two epics and the *Bhagavad Gita* is acknowledged with utmost faith and sanctity even today. The *Ramayana* is believed to have been composed by Rishi Valmiki around 300 BC. Incorporating a number of legends and based on mythical stories from the *Vedas*, it tells the story of Lord Rama regaining his throne and rescuing his wife from the demon Ravana. Mystically, the *Ramayana* is the story of the soul seeking its Divine home.

The *Mahabharata* believed to have been written by Rishi Veda Vyasa, contains a number of episodes which make the spiritual and religious teachings understandable to the common man. The *Mahabharata* reflects the symbolical journey of the human soul (represented by Arjuna) which faces trials and tribulations (represented by the *Kauravas*) on the spiritual journey and it is with the help of the charioteer, Krishna that Arjuna is able to control his fears and doubts and patiently move ahead on the journey. The *Bhagavad Gita*, which forms part of the Book Six of the *Mahabharata* is set on the battlefield, between the two opposing parties the *Pandavas* and the *Kauravas*. It contains Lord Krishna’s response to questions posed by the warrior Arjuna concerning the nature of good and evil and the spiritual struggle towards realization of the Divine.

Only by love can men see Me and know Me, and enter into Me.

He who works for Me, who loves Me, whose supreme Goal is Me, free from attachment to all things, and with true love for all creation, he, truly, becomes one with Me. (Bhagavad Gita, 11:54-55)

Reflecting on the mystical overtones in the *Bhagavad Gita*, one learns that as a true guide to Arjuna, Lord Krishna made his disciple emerge from the state of ignorance (*avidya*) and enjoy and relish the state of wisdom (*jnana*). He leads him away from *maya* (illusion) towards a state of understanding what is real. *Moksha* (enlightenment) is the means of purging ones desires and beliefs of this transitory world and thus becoming conscious of the Higher reality. Hence as a true teacher, Lord Krishna guides Arjuna out of his confusion by leading him on the path towards higher consciousness.

John Davidson in *The Treasury of Mystic Terms* points out that, Islam as a religion began with the religious teachings and commandments of Prophet Muhammad in 622 AD. The *Quran* was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by the Holy angel Gabreil. The Holy *Quran*, the verbatim word of God, is considered to be the last and the truthful words of Lord, beyond which nothing else exists. Muslims (the followers of Islam) believe that God is one and incomparable and the purpose of existence is to love and serve God. Muslims also believe that Islam is the complete and universal version of a primordial faith that was revealed at many times and places. Abraham, Moses and Jesus are prophets through whom the Divine Truth has been revealed. The term Islam, is often translated as “submission”, for the Muslims believe that to surrender to the will of God will lead to its consequence of the achievement of peace (*salam*). The Muslims maintain that the Arabic *Quran* to be both the unaltered and the final revelation of God.

Say, (O Muslims): we believe in *Allah*,  
and that which is revealed unto us,  
and that which was revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael,  
and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes,  
and that which Moses and Jesus received,  
and that which the prophets received from their Lord.

We make no distinction between any of them,  
and unto Him we have surrendered. (al-Baqarah, 2:136)

The Holy *Quran* is regarded as the symbolical “embodiment of the intimate relationship between God and humankind.” (Gordon, 6) Religious concepts and practices include the five pillars of Islam, *Shahadah*, *Salah*, *Sawm*, *Zakah* and *Hajj*. These are the basic concepts and obligatory acts of worship for a Muslim. The *Quran* is accompanied by the teachings, life and an account of the feelings and perceptions of Prophet Mohammad. This account is called the *Hadith*. Interpreting the *Quran* and the *Hadith* is the task of religious men called the *Ulama* or the religious scholars. From their interpretations are formed the religious law and order of Islam known as the *Sharia*’t.

Sufism, an off-shoot of Islam, laid stress on inner purity and the knowledge of God by intuition. It is also known by the name of Islamic mysticism. It is said to have begun with the Muhammad himself, as all the Islamic religious orders trace their inspiration from him. John A Subhan points out:

He (Prophet Mohammad) is said to have been the recipient of a two-fold revelation, the one embodied in the contents of the *Quran*, the other within his heart. The former meant for all and is binding on all; the latter was to be transmitted to the chosen few through these lines of succession. Hence it is that Muhammad’s knowledge in popular language is described as being *ilm-i-safina*, book knowledge, and *ilm-i-sina*, heart knowledge. The former is incorporated in the doctrinal teaching of the *Ulama*; the latter is strictly esoteric, the mystical teaching of the Sufis. (Subhan, 8)

There are a number of assumptions regarding the meaning and derivation of the word “Sufi”. Some believe it to have been derived from the Arabic word, *safa* (purity) or to *Ashabu-safa* (the people of the bench) (Gordon, 6). But with greater certainty the word is believed to have been derived from the word *Suf* (wool) as it symbolized the voluntary poverty and

renunciation of the pleasures of the world by the practitioner. (Subhan, 7) Hamid Hussain, defined Sufism as:

Sufism basically connotes renunciation of worldly pleasures, complete devotion to God and healing hearts and sufferings through spiritualism and service towards humanity. It is a way to reach God through the rigorous practices of *salat* (prayer), *faqr* (poverty), *zikr* (remembrance of God), *fana* (annihilation) and *safa* (purity of body and soul). Important components of these practices are *tauba* (repentance), *zuhud* (asceticism), *tawakkul* (trust in God), *reza* (satisfaction), etc. In this pursuit a Sufi moves through different stations of mystic experiences. (Hussain, xv-xvi)

According to the Sufis one must have the guidance of a *pir* or *murshid*, without which spiritual development is impossible. Remembrance of God or reflecting on his Holy Name or *dhikr* is regarded as an important component for the spiritual awakening of a Sufi practitioner. The earliest form of Sufism was characterised by renunciation of worldly pleasures and an intense fear of *Allah* and His judgement. As Schimmel points out, “early Sufism firmly relied upon the two parts of the profession of faith: that ‘there is no deity save God’ and ‘Muhammad is the messenger of God.’” (Schimmel, 131) Hasan al-Basri, is regarded as the most prominent figure of the earliest Sufism. Rabia Basri a younger contemporary of Hasan al- Basri, believed that,

...true piety was grounded in *tawakkul*, or trusting acceptance of God’s will, and total dependence on Him. From this she developed the concept of Divine Love and the idea of possible intimacy with God. She used prayer as a medium of free and intimate communication with God. (Khanam, 26)

The Sufis that followed after Rabia used love ‘in more refined forms’ in their works. In her essay on “Sufism and the Islamic Tradition”, Schimmel points out the development of the Sufi thought. The Sufis used a language which is charged with the praises of God. In her

analysis of the works of Abu'l- Husain an- Nuri (a Baghdadian mystic) Schimmel described the growth of soul and the cleaning of heart for the spiritual path. Kharraz and Junaid of Baghdad around 900 A.D. made use of subtle allusions to depict their spiritual experiences. Hallaj defined his mystic love as the one in which the pupil is not affected by the afflictions given by God on the spiritual path because the sufferings are also a form of His love. Hallaj believed that when one has unflinching faith in the Divine then nothing can stop him from moving ahead on the spiritual path. It was because of his undeviating love for God that he could bear the torture and execution to which he was condemned. Death for Sufi mystics is also regarded as a gateway to be united with God.

With the development of Neo- Platonic thought and of Persian, Indian and Buddhist ideologies, Sufism underwent some changes in the early seventh and eighth centuries. Theosophy, Gnosticism, ecstasy and pantheism became marked features of Sufism. It was regarded as separate from Islam, though it remained linked with it. While the orthodox practitioners of Islam believed in the observance of rituals, the Sufis considered love and devotion as the only means of attaining salvation. "Sufism grew organically out of the Islamic soil by an interiorization of the basic duties of every Muslim, by a 'koranization' of the memory, an increasing emphasis upon the pre-eternal covenant between God and man, and the introduction of the idea of mutual love between God and man." (Schimmel, 140)

The Sufis believed that the universe is a creation of God which as a mirror reflects God in everything. They believe that by reflecting on God and by concentrating on the Holy Name of the Lord Divine illumination can be experienced. The whole process of spiritual realization or Divine illumination as it has been called happens only after the Sufi begins his journey towards spiritual realization. The Sufi path of the soul is a movement from the sphere of material world to the pure spiritual state. The path of a Sufi includes the following stages:



- *Ubudiyyat* or the stage of manhood: It is the stage of realization when the man realizes his mistakes in the past, his wastage of time in slumber and following of evil means in life.
- *Ishq* or love: Love for the divine helps man in remembering the Lord (*dhikr*) and this makes him to have an urge to gain his vision.
- *Zuhd* or renunciation: The Sufi has to set aside all worldly pleasures.
- *Marifat* or knowledge: The knowledge of the nature and attributes of God.
- *Wajd* or ecstasy: The mental excitement created through the remembrance of the Lord. As Professor Nicholson points out, "The whole of Sufism rests on the belief that when the individual self is lost, the Universal Self is found, or, in religious language, that ecstasy affords the only means by which the soul can directly communicate and become united with God." (Nicholson, 59)
- *Haqiqat* or reality: The stage when the heart is illumined with the true nature of the Lord.
- *Wasi* or union: The stage when the mystic is able to see God face to face.

The greatest of Sufis expressed their ideas in the form of poems or even anecdotes. These depict the closeness they feel with the Lord or the kind of enlightenment that envelopes them with His Vision. Idries Shah comments, “The Sufi’s world has extra dimensions; to him things are meaningful in a sense which they are not to people who follow only the training which is imposed upon them by ordinary society.” (Shah, 35) He further elucidates that a Sufi’s life is but simple and made up of his daily experiences which give him the glimpses of the Divine. Maulana Rumi and his verses reveal his knowledge and vision for which he is regarded as “first rank of mystical masters.” (Shah, 135) His most popular work *Mathnavi* became a source book for later writers. It furnished them with mystical ideas and allusions. He was amongst the first Sufis to have popularized the practice of dance- that is the whirling motion of the *darvish* on the sound of music. He suggested that when the spiritual path is understood with love in one’s heart and not by norms of the leaders it is then that the mind can be awakened towards spirituality. Ibn al- Arabi (1164-1240) made use of love in which he depicted the soul as the longing wife and God as the longed – for Husband. (Britannica, Web)

Though Sufism had its origin in Persia it had spread to India in the eleventh century. The first Sufi saint in the Indian sub-continent was Shaikh Ismail of Lahore who started preaching his ideas which soon spread everywhere. The most famous of the Sufi saints then in India was Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, who settled in Ajmer and made it the centre of his activities. He had a number of disciples who are called Sufis of the Chishti order. Another well-known Sufi saint was Bahauddin Zakariya who came under the influence of another famous mystic Shihabuddin Suhrawardi. His branch of Sufi saints was known as the Sufis of the Suhrawardi Order. (Holistic Thought, Web) Baba Farid became the first poet to have written Sufi verses on the Indian sub-continent. This tradition was further developed and the idea of mystical love became more prominent in the *kafis* of Punjabi poets like Bulleh Shah, Sultan Bahu, Shah Hussain and others. Later the tradition of making use of love legends with mystical

overtone was used to depict the relationship between soul and God. The other orders of Sufism include, the Naqshbandi, and the Qadiriya.

The liberal and unorthodox features of Sufism had a profound influence on medieval *Bhakti* saints of India. Idries Shah points out, “The influence of Sufism upon Indian mystical life has been so great that several schools which had been considered to be the product of Ancient Hinduism are revealed by scholars to have originated in Sufi teachings.” (Shah, 356) Dr. Tara Chand noted that the concepts of monotheism, indifference towards caste, self-surrender, adoration of the teacher and absorption in God are some of the features which influenced the *Bhakti* ideology. When the Sufi movement was gaining popularity in India, about the same time the *Bhakti* cult was gaining strength among the Hindus. Savitri Chandra Shobha states that, “The *Bhakti* movement can scarcely be called a mass movement in a strict sense, for its objective was individual salvation or mystical union with God rather than a change in the living conditions of the masses, except indirectly. Likewise, it can hardly be called a single movement, barring in the broad, doctrinal sense of a movement which emphasized divine grace as a means of attaining salvation or nearness to God with the help of a guide or guru.” (Shobha, 1) But in history the medieval *Bhakti* movement is regarded as one of the most wide-spread, far-ranging and multi-faceted movements that took place in India. It had a powerful impact on the religious life of the people and also on the art, culture and literature of India. The growth of literature in regional languages was one of the major reasons for its wide-spread growth in the Indian sub-continent. Neeti M. Sadargani rightly states:

The *Bhakti* Movement was the phenomenal attempt of the marginalized segment (i.e. regional languages and literature and the lower castes and classes) at decentralizing the hierarchy imposed by the Brahmin fraternity. The saints who led the reform movement were mystics and poets of a high order. From its very inception the *Bhakti* ideology was guided by humanising cosmopolitanism, an emotional fervour and a thirst for the divine essence and experience. (Sadargani, vi)

*Bhakti* is defined as devotion in English. It is regarded as the highest emotion which leads to God realisation. The devotee expresses his love and affection for God in the form of hymns and verses that he sings in His praise. In all the years that *Bhakti* developed in India it was divided into a number of schools or *sampradayas*. The groups were divided according to which incarnation of *Brahman* they had their faith on- Lord Rama or Krishna. Sunita Puri highlights, "...the notion of *Bhakti* was a common theme to all the saints, the movement has often been treated as a monolithic growth and dissimilar and contradictory trends have been cumulatively characterised as the *Bhakti* movement." (Puri, 84)

As we trace the development of the *Bhakti* movement in India, it is important to know that before the *Bhakti* movement had influenced the people of the Indian sub-continent at large, in the time period between sixth and tenth centuries it was more popular in the South. Shankaracharya is regarded as the first Hindu saint to have developed the idea of *Bhakti* to "give a new orientation to Hinduism". He was born in Kaladi in Kerala. He preached that with knowledge man can be made aware of the reality and that *maya* is an obstruction in realizing the truth. His doctrine of *Advaita* or Monism in which he declared that there was no difference between God and universe and that of *Atma* and *Brahman* were not understandable to the common man. As G. S. Chhabra highlights, "Shankaraharya's philosophy became stagnant,... his philosophy of *maya* was beyond the common man's understanding. Moreover, the ignorant masses of India could understand better a God with human attributes, than the one who was abstract and contained in the universe as the universe was contained in Him." (Chhabra, 38) In the twelfth century, Ramanuja, a follower of Sankara, was born at Sriperumbudur near modern day Chennai. He preached the philosophy of *Visishtadvaita* which meant that though God is one but he is present in the form of his manifestations. Ramanuja highlighted that God is *Sagunabrahman*. He stated that the Supreme Being (*Brahman* or *Narayan*) is God with

attributes (*Saguna*). In his prose work *Saranagati Gadya* he advocated the *prapattimarga* or the path of self-surrender to God.

The *Bhakti* movement grew in the North as a “defence mechanism to save the Hindu society” (Shobha, 15) from the conversion to Islam and its strict doctrines. It was the great saint-scholar Ramanand who brought the *Bhakti* Movement to the North. As Dr. Tara Chand opines, “Ramananda was the bridge between the *Bhakti* movement of the south and the north.” (Chand, 143) Ramanand lived between the fourteenth and the first quarter of the fifteenth centuries. He was a follower of the line of thought promoted by his teacher Ramanuja in the South but came to disagree on the dietary restrictions and caste exclusiveness which were a part of the teachings of Ramanuja. He had his own set of followers who later on came to be called as the *Nirgun Bhakti* poet-saints. The *nirgunis* believed in the powers of the *nirgun* deity (the one without a form or name) and worshipped Him.

The *Bhakti* movement also had a tremendous impact on the art, culture and literature of the medieval period. *Bhakti* literature mostly developed as a creative output of mystical experiences of the *Bhakti* saints. These mostly comprised love poetry. And this love is the love that a devotee experiences for his Lord even if it is the *saguna* Lord as worshipped in the form of Krishna by Surdas or Mirabai, and Rama as in the case of Tulsidas; or the *nirguna* Lord, referred to in the hymns of Kabir, Guru Nanak, Ravidas and Namdev, who disapproved of incarnations and forms. The Centre for Cultural Resources and Training highlights that,

This love is depicted as love between husband and wife, or between lovers, or between servant and master, or between parent and child. A personalisation to the concept of God is shown in the *Bhakti* literature, which means a truthful acknowledgement of God residing in oneself. The dominating note in *Bhakti* is ecstasy and total identity with God. (CCRTIndia, Web)

The rise of *Bhakti* poetry gave rise to regional languages as the poets made use of the language of the common man instead of *Sanskrit* which was regarded as the language of the scholars. It also attacked the age-old caste system which had led to divisions in the society and devoted itself to the worship of humanity, as the *Bhakti* saints adhered to the idea that God resides in all. The *Bhakti* movement in essence was subaltern, as it gave voice to the saints who themselves belonged to the lower castes.

Karine Schomer in her essay on “Sant Tradition In Perspective” highlights that *nirgun* and *sagun bhakti* gradually gave rise to what was later known as the *sant mat* or the *sant* tradition in India. Schomer terms Kabir to be the ‘fountainhead of the Sant movement’ (Schomer, 7). Kabir’s poetry touches upon the various aspects of devotion, mysticism and social reform. As P. D. Barthwal states, “In him (Kabir) both *Vedanta* and Sufism joined hands to proclaim that God is one and imageless, that he is not to be found in rituals and forms which are but veils of falsehood hiding Him from us, but is to be realized as one within us being enshrined in our own hearts, and forming the substance in all that exists.” (Barthwal, 15)

Later the *Sant* tradition was taken forward by Guru Nanak (1469-1539), founder of the Sikh religion and Dadu Dayal of Rajasthan (1544-1603). The time period in which these three flourished is regarded as the most creative phase of the *sant* tradition in north India. They helped the common people to shed age-old superstitions and attain salvation through *Bhakti* or pure devotion. Unlike the early reformers, they were not linked with any particular religious creed and did not believe in rituals and ceremonies. They condemned polytheism and believed in one God. They also denounced all forms of idolatry. They strongly believed in *Bhakti* as the only means of salvation. They also emphasised the fundamental unity of all religions. The other

saints who contributed to the *Sant* tradition in India were, Charandas (1702-1781), Paltu Sahib, of the late eighteenth century and Tulsi Sahib of Hathras (1760-1843) amongst others.

The mystical experiences of the great mystics have always intrigued researchers and seekers from all over the world. It is when these mystics share their experiences that the readers are able to understand the bliss or ecstasy experienced by them. The feelings of delight, happiness experienced by the mystics form the very essence of their writings. A number of psychologists have provided scientific explanations of how the mystical experience eventually develops into something of utmost delight for the mystic. As stated by James Bissett Pratt in his book *The Religious Experience: A Psychological Study* ‘mysticism’ can be defined as, “...the sense of the presence of being or reality through other means other than the ordinary perceptive processes or the reason. It is the *sense* or *feeling* of this presence, not the belief in it, and it is not the result of sight, hearing or touch, nor is it a conclusion one reaches by thought; it is, instead, an immediate and intuitive experience.” (Pratt, 337) The terms “*sense*” and “*feeling*” here explain the subjective experience one goes through, while undergoing the mystical process. William James in his *The Varieties of Religious Experience* has proposed four ways which can define an experience as mystical. It must be ineffable (cannot be expressed), has noetic quality that is, knowledge of the undiscovered realms, must be transient and must render the practitioner passive.

The mystic’s experience when recorded actually becomes the “language of ‘silence’”. The poem or the song which a mystic writes is a rich expression of the mystic experience. Mysticism in literature can be studied through the poems and treatises written by the enlightened minds. As stated earlier, even today most of the popular literature contains myths, legends and stories taken from classical Indian Literature. In English Literature one can easily

see the influence of philosophy of love on the writings of some of the great poets like William Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley, Christina Rossetti and others.

Poetry has been a popular medium to convey the true feelings and spiritual experience of the mystic. The ordinary speech becomes mundane and superficial for the mystic who tries to give concrete shape to those ecstatic experiences which are actually indescribable. Poetic language helps to give meaning to the transcendental experiences that a mystic undergoes. Ernst Cassirer rightly points out: “All mysticism is directed towards a world beyond language, a world of silence.... The spiritual depth and power of language is strikingly evinced in the fact that it is speech itself which prepares the way for the last step whereby it is itself transcended.” (Cassirer, 74) The words and phrases used by a mystic make music of their own and this is the reason why the poetic output of a mystic is rich in symbols. Symbols in mystical poetry play a significant role as it is through the use of these symbols that the mystical essence is conveyed to the readers. M. G. Gupta highlights, “It must be remembered by any spiritual seeker that man’s ultimate concern must be expressed symbolically, because symbolic language alone is able to express the ‘ultimate’. Symbols (like signs) point beyond themselves to something else.” (Gupta, 14)

John Davidson uses the term “Divine Creative Power” for the mystic language. He explains it as, “...the creative Power not only provides his link with God, but also the path of his return to the Divine; for one of the continuous refrains throughout mystic literature is that this Power can be heard as heavenly sound or music and can be seen as a divine light or radiance on the inner planes of creation.” (Davidson, 3:3) This creative power is known by different names like, *Ab-I Hayat*, *anahata*, *Nam*, *Shabd*, and other names, in the different cultures of the world. This creative power becomes the inspiration for mystics and a source to convey their emotions and mystical experiences in the form of poetry or other artistic means.



Evelyn Underhill in her book *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness*, has explained the relationship between mysticism and symbolism. She shows the contrast between the experiences of a mystic and that of an ordinary human being. A mystic colours his expressions with the experiences of his soul when he is in close communion with God. Therefore the language a mystic uses is “symbolic, allusive, oblique: always suggest, but never tell, the truth”. (Underhill, 126) The study of symbols and symbolism in mystic poetry thus becomes essential to understand the essence of the poem. The *Shrimad Bhagawatam* states, “Worship me in the symbols and images which remind thee of me.” (Scott, PDF File) A mystic takes these symbols and conveys his message of union with God. It is through the interpretation of these symbols that the experience of the mystic can be understood and felt by the readers. *Ta'wil* or *brahmavidya* also known as the science of hermeneutics makes it possible for the readers to interpret and understand the ecstatic and personal experiences of the mystic.

Norman Blaikie defines symbol as, “The symbol as it stands means more than one thing; there are different levels of meaning contained in it. The most obvious, or literal meaning hides the figurative meaning but at the same time it also discloses it, since the figurative meaning cannot be grasped except through the literal meaning.” (Sinha, 10) The word ‘symbol’ is derived from the Greek verb *symbollein*, means ‘to throw together’ and its noun *symbolon* meaning ‘mark, emblem, token or sign’. Cuddon defines symbol as “an object animate or inanimate which represents or stands for something else.” (Cuddon, 885)

For centuries, writers and mystics have experienced sudden insights that seem detached from the flow of everyday perception. In many ways, these are the high points of human experience and the focus of artistic production. They are conveyed through symbols, which also give meaning to the poems of William Blake, William Wordsworth, George Herbert, Henry

Vaughan, etc. Symbolism thus forms the core of mystical works. In literature a symbol generally “combines an image with a concept”, for instance, ‘the journey to the underworld’ has been used by Dante in his *Divina Comedia* to show the journey of the human soul and the way it emerges from all suffering by having faith in the One. In English literature symbols are prominently used in poetry, prose and even drama. In fiction some of the prominent writers who have used symbolism in their works are Herman Melville, William Golding, Kafka and many others. In the works of these writers the symbols are depicted by the use of a concrete image to express an emotion or an abstract idea.

Ernst Cassirer, one of the prominent German Philosophers of the twentieth-century gave his philosophy on “Symbolic Forms” which provided a better understanding of the way in which symbols evolve and are used in various forms of art and literature by the artist. According to Cassirer every ‘substance’ has a particular ‘function’, and it plays a ‘contextual’ role. The meaning of the symbol is understood by the context in which it is used or the reality it projects. It is when the ‘symbol’ has a mythical essence that the ‘concept’ is first to be understood. The symbolic forms have a multiple ‘functional series’ by which the world is apprehended and comprehended. Cassirer defines this symbolic form as: “Under a ‘symbolic form’ shall be understood every energy of spirit through which a spiritual – meaning- content is connected to a concrete sensual sign and is intrinsically bound to that sign.” (Luft, 275) A symbolic form is thus the experiencing agent and that which the writer experiences. It is the “energy of spirit” generating a “space of meaning” in which we find ourselves together with that which we experience in a specific sense. A symbolic form is not itself a world but that which forms a world as a meaningful context or totality. Human life is a life “in” meaning in the sense that it is a “spiritual energy” that overarches every experiencing process and connects that which is experienced to a “spiritual meaning-content,” i.e., language, religion, myth, art, etc. A mystic’s poetry is therefore an expression of what he undergoes in his experience. The symbols used by

him are therefore his visions and a statement of what he experiences. As Sebastian Luft mentions:

The true is the whole, but each particular truth is relative upon its symbolic context. The whole is hence not any sphere-shaped absolute but the absolute is essentially the relative. It is impossible to rid oneself of symbolic forms and to see “absolutely” or “freely.” We never see the “thing in itself” but only phenomena bearing a certain symbolic pregnancy. Likewise, we do not live in one world but in a plurality of meaningful contexts that have been generated by the energy of spirit, which is nothing but human reason conceived of in the totality of its achievements. (Luft, 278)

Symbolism as a movement in literature began in the nineteenth century in French Poetry. In “Oeuvres Completes” (1891) Mallarme explained symbolism as the art of evoking an object ‘little by little so as to reveal a mood’ or ‘the art of choosing an object and extracting from it an ‘etat d’ame’. This ‘mood’ was to be extracted by ‘a series of decipherings.’ The definitive manifesto of Symbolist Movement was published in September, 1886 in an article “Le Figaro” by Jean Moreas. The Symbolist school was therefore founded by Jean Moreas and other prominent poets of this movement- Baudelaire, Mallarme, Verlaine and Rimbaud. The French poets particularly Baudelaire and his followers popularized the concept of “poet as a seer”. They believed that a poet could create this “other world” by suggestion and symbolism, by transforming reality into a greater and a more permanent reality.

Symbols according to their usage and purpose are therefore divided into two types: human symbols and transcendental symbols. According to Charles Chadwick human symbols are confined to the ideas or expressions used by the poet in order to convey the meaning to the readers. Transcendental symbols, on the other hand, are those which “are not from the general human world but from a vast and general ideal world of which the real world is just an imperfect representation.” (Chadwick, n.p.) The ‘transcendental’ concept is Platonic in origin. It

was elaborated by the neo-Platonists in the third century and was given considerable value in the works of Swedenborg. This idea of transcendental symbols was further emphasised by the French poets. They believed that the attainment of the vision of the essential was to be achieved by a deliberate blurring of reality so that the ideal world becomes clearer. Therefore by the extensive use of images and by enhancing the musical quality of the verse such a pure poetry can be formulated. Later on the ideals of the Symbolist School were also followed by some of the prominent American poets and writers like Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson and others in the early twentieth century.

In the Indian sub-continent the verses of the Sufi and the *Bhakti* poets are rich in symbols and have a unique musical quality. The mystical essence and love for God are conveyed very clearly through their verses. In her chapter on “Mysticism and Symbolism” Evelyn Underhill explains three classes of symbols which are formed by the three kinds of cravings of the human soul. She writes,

The first is the craving which makes him a pilgrim and wanderer. It is the longing to go out from his normal world in search of a lost home, a “better country”; an Eldorado, a Sarras, a Heavenly Syon. The next is that craving of heart for heart, of the soul for its perfect mate, which makes him a lover. The third is the craving for inward purity and perfection, which makes him an ascetic, and in the last resort a saint. (Underhill, 126)

These three cravings of the human soul thus distinguish the mystics according to their experience of the Absolute Truth. The first craving makes the poet a seeker of the truth. His vision of the ideal world is a quest or a journey from this real world to the spiritual world. For him, the soul seeks its real home with the Almighty. The second craving depicts a personal and intimate relation with the divine. The symbols used in these works are mostly inspired by the earthly passions specifically love. The verses of the great Sufi poets like Bulleh Shah, Shah Hussain and also the *Qissa* poetry of Punjab prominently highlight these emotions of love, sorrow, longing and an urge to be close to the beloved. Though these poets make use of earthly

passions but it is the higher or the spiritual love that is suggested in their verses. In the third kind the mystic generally highlights an evolution or spiritual growth by following a specific code of conduct or by meditating on the name of the Lord. For him spiritual growth is more of an inward change rather than an outward search.

Symbols have been a part of ancient history. In the Harappan Civilization the beliefs of the people were conveyed by means of drawings and paintings. Even the mystic sages of the past give evidence of the existence of primordial ideas on the origin of cosmos, the powers of good and evil, the dark dreary descriptions of the underworld, and the descriptions of the Supreme Father and mother Earth. It is surprising to note the similarities that one can find in the descriptions of these ideas in the different cultures of the world. Swami Abhayananda states: "In almost every instance, we may discover the legend of an original Father-God, whose first Thought or Word, symbolized in the form of a Mother-Goddess, is said to have given birth to all creation." (Abhayananda, 60) The basis of all religious symbols is common in all religions of the world. He, the God Father, has been addressed by different names like *An*, *Apsu*, *Prajapati*, *Purusha*, *Tao*, *Pitah*, *Yahweh* among other names. He is the 'absolute stillness', 'pure consciousness', 'the unclouded mind', he is projected as the substratum on which the whole universe is projected. The *Bhagwad Gita* and the *Mahabharata* which form the very basis of Indian mythology and Indian religions provide the descriptions of the origin of the Universe in the form of the vision of *Brahman*. The *Japji Sahib* of Guru Nanak Dev Ji gives us details of how this universe came into existence with the Word of the Lord. Likewise the Mother, has been referred to by many names like, *Kali*, *Devi*, *Durga*, and others. She is the creative effusion of the Father; She is Mother Nature, the creative Power of the Father-God, manifested in the entire cosmos.

The commonalities one finds in the ideas and images formed by different mystics in their verses tell us that the thought emerges from the knowledge of the Absolute Truth. The knowledge that all is part of the One dawns on the mystic. The person in deep meditation or while reciting the Name of the Lord, experiences oneness with God and he also undergoes the acceptance of the fact that all is created from the Supreme Will of the Lord. The figure of the Goddess Mother, symbolizes the giver of life, a creative force. She gives life and nourishes the off-spring and is an image of a young and tender mother. The image of the Father and Mother together in some myths of Syria, Babylon and Sumeran is regarded as the two complimentary aspects of one Divine Reality. In almost all the scriptures of the world a universality in thought and the use of symbols used can be witnessed. Nature and its agents play a significant role in conveying the ideas of the mystic. Flowers, rivers, gardens, seasons of the year all act as the vehicle for the poet mystic to convey his feelings to the readers.

In the essay titled “Symbols and Religious Language”, Glyn Richards enumerates the essential characteristics of symbols. These include:

- **Acceptability, Innate power and Necessary Character-** The writer states that the symbol should be acceptable not to the individual who has used it but socially. An individual may create a symbol but it is the society which accepts and understands that symbol. And therefore, it has an inherent power to convey the meaning of what it symbolises.
- **Representation and Participation-** It is on the basis of the representation of certain symbols in a work of art that the meaning is transferred. A poet may use a ‘tavern’ and ‘wine’ to depict his spiritual experience but it is by its representation in the work that the idea is able to reach the readers.

- **Mediation and Integration-** In mystical works the symbols have the power to convey the spiritual idea highlighted by the artist. The symbols may be from the ordinary world but the meaning they convey is profound. In mystical works a symbol works in such a way that it carries the meaning of the poem with it. But the symbol has to be so well integrated that it may not digress the reader from the message of the poet.

During the search of God within, the mystic experiences a number of emotions. These include: the joy of experiencing the union with the Lord, the expression of the warmth of His love, the sorrow of separation, the urge to be near Him and lastly the ecstasy of re-union with Him. The words, expressions, settings and also the imagery of the poems show the mood of the mystic. Though the mystic makes use of earthly expressions but the love he expresses has spiritual connotations. The journey of the lover is to seek his beloved which actually is the quest of the soul to reach the Almighty. Therefore the struggles of the lover are actually the yearnings of the soul for God. As Lalita Sinha mentions, “The Quest refers to a process of transformation of the lover, from the human, worldly and materialistic modes of existence, to the divine, celestial and spiritual modes, involving much trial and tribulations.” (Sinha, xvii)

In simple language love can be defined, as a feeling of affection towards a person or a thing. But the meaning of the word ‘love’ changes when mystical or spiritual overtones are attached to it. In one of his articles Dr. Javed Nurbaksh defines the three kinds of love- the first form of love depicts the love in friendship because it is in accordance to the norms of the society. The second form is the love shared between family members.

The third kind of love transcends all conventions based on mutual expectations and is based on the following principle: “I am for you, you are for whoever you choose; I accept whatever you want without any expectations whatsoever.”

The mystic’s devotion to God and to the master of the Path represents this latter form of love. This third kind of love is not based upon any constraints or conditions, and the mystic who possesses this kind of love says with contentment and submission to God: “I am satisfied with whatever You want without any expectations, and love You without any thought of reward.” (Nurbaksh, Web)

For mystics “love” is the purest expression of their experience. When Akbar, invited Dadu Sahab to his palace he is said to have asked the seer “What is the caste of God, what is His colour, what His personality, what His person?” Dadu is said to have replied in a couplet which is recorded in his *Bani*: “Love is God’s caste, Love His colour, Love His personality, Love His person.” (Barthwal, 76)

In Sufi poetry and also the verses of the *Bhakti* poets ‘love’ has an important role to play. The poetic works of some of the greatest poets in the Indian sub-continent including Kabir, Bulleh Shah, Shah Hussain and others convey the ecstasy of love. The mystical journey finds expression in the poems of these mystics. The mystic confides all his/her personal experiences and the various emotions of love experienced while on his journey on the mystical path. This love shows the unity of the two, the lover and the beloved or the Almighty and the soul or the master and the disciple. There is no plural in the mystical union but only one. As Kabir states in one his verses, “The lane of love is narrow, it cannot accommodate two.” (Barthwal, 79) P. D. Barthwal explains this as, “This Divine love (grace) which we see through the auspicious qualities attributed to God attracts us to Him and evokes love (devotion) in us and leads further to love in which the parts *per se*, opposed to each other, lose their opposition and assume a unitary harmonious relationship. It is in this perception of things in their



wholeness in which their proportion and relation to each other is properly realized that we know as truth.” (Barthwal, 79)

The poets make use of the image of the lover and beloved to show the Divine Love. The love shared by a mother and a child or the love of siblings is not depicted, as it is the love of the lovers that is fearless and goes beyond all social norms and is passionate. On the spiritual path the seeker’s love for the Lord is so strong that he shares his experiences through his art or writings. The metaphors and symbols used help to convey the intensity of emotions of the lover. The repetition of words and symbols and descriptions of the different experiences the lover undergoes are also a mediums to convey the emotions of the lover.

The mystic poets while writing of their love for the Divine make use of the female voice. They address themselves as the female craving for her beloved. The use of the female voice became popular in the Punjabi Sufi poetry of Bulleh Shah, Waris Shah and other Sufi poets. This female persona was not only made prominent through the symbols used by the poets but the poets themselves adopted the female attributes. Ishwar Dayal Gaur states, “A notable attribute of the female persona of the Punjab Sufis is that they did not emulate the conventional masculine linguistic style or behaviour to project themselves as female. At the level of language, poetic genre and physical appearance, they (particularly Shah Hussain and Bulleh Shah), adopted such practices that strengthened their ‘female’ persona.” (Gaur, 233)

In the Sufi way of life it is important that one should give away all the worldly and materialistic possessions in order to be one with the Lord. The image of the *faqir* is prominently depicted in Punjabi Sufi poetry. Therefore, Ranjha shown as a *faqir* in Waris Shah’s *Heer* shows how he dispossesses himself from his clan, land, leaves his homeland and roams the streets in order to find his beloved. It is by giving up his possessions that the process of self-

realization occurs in Ranjha. He takes shelter of Tilla Balnath and shows his desire to be a *jogi*.

Azar Waqar explains this process of self-realization and purification of the lover as follows:

Becoming a faqir or servant of God is a stage in self-realization or self-discovery. It is also a stage during the journey of human consciousness. The theme of breaking for the sake of construction of one's new self, is common in Punjabi poetry. The ego (*Nafs*) has to be broken, the body and heart and everything in it naughted, so that God can reside there. To know the inner most heart means to discover the point at which the divine is found, which is the meeting point of the human and the divine. The only means of drawing near the divine beloved is by constant purification through love. Love for God and love for his creation having transformed him through 'Loving *Tauhīd*' man sees with the eye of intuitive knowledge and understands the way to God. Ranjha gains spiritual strength and knowledge of the world. (Waqar, PDF File)

Ranjha also becomes the image of the beloved for whom the female lover, Heer craves. Ranjha is used as the symbol of the *pir*, *mushid* or the master with whom the disciple wants to re-unite. In the verses of Bulleh Shah and Shah Hussain, 'Ranjha' has been used to address their *pir*. Being separated from him they show how they have lost their direction and there is no peace of mind. The sorrow of separation is highlighted through verses addressed to their master.

In line with the different shades attached to love we see a variety of emotions that a lover undergoes in this process of gaining union with the beloved. These shades of love include the mood of initial union and separation in this union, the longing and the pain of separation, fusion and confusion in separation, and lastly the re-union of the two separated souls. Lalita Sinha in her book *The Garden of Love: Mystical Symbolism in Layla Majnu and Gita Govind* gives an assessment of these stages and calls it *Unio Mystica*. *Unio Mystica*, is the process of union and absorption of human soul into God. It is defined as, "*Unio Mystica*, or the ultimate point of identification with the Divine, is arrived at through a process of transformation." (Sinha, 47) This process is elucidated in the following diagram given by Sinha in her book:

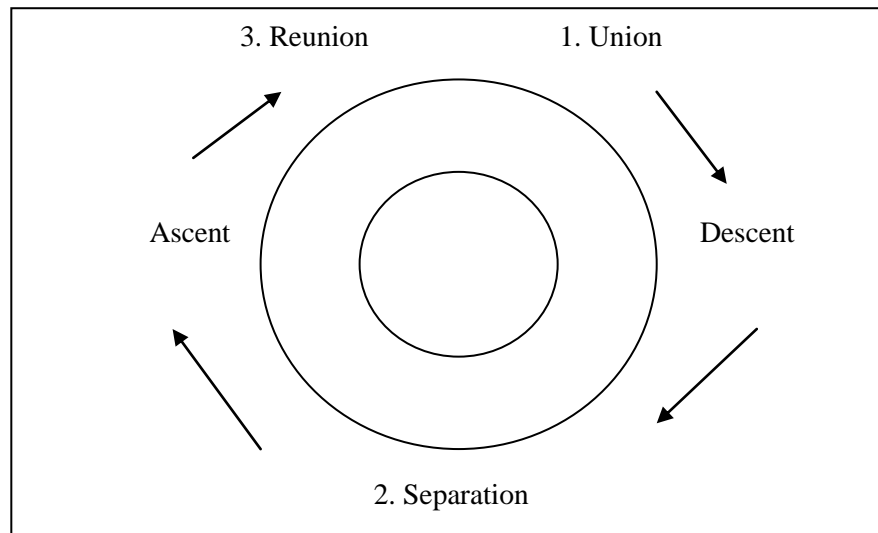


Fig. 1. The depiction of the stages *unio mystica*

The figure depicts a cyclical pattern in mystical development. After getting a glimpse of the initial union the soul is led towards the state of separation and the efforts the seeker puts in leads to the reunion with the Lord. The states of union and re-union are placed on the same level though they differ qualitatively, in the sense that the soul has a different level of maturity by the time it reaches its final stage of re-union.

The first stage of “union” refers to the initial union, a state of innocence and ignorance. It depicts the paradisiacal divinity in man. It is the state when the soul gets a glimpse of the bliss experienced in mystical union. It is the state of existential purity that a soul is born with. In this state the ignorance of the soul leads to the impending separation from the divine state which the soul till now enjoyed.

“Separation” is contrary to “union”. It is the fall of the soul from the divine state. It is the stage where the soul suffers from its loss of eternal bliss which it experienced till now. The

seeker has to crush his self or ego and has to completely surrender to the Divine Will. For a Sufi and a *Bhakti* saint this experience of separation or *birha* has often been given a kingly status. The love which the seeker has in his heart becomes his strength and makes him cross pass this phase of suffering with ease. Though the man becomes impatient in some instances but he regains his equanimity with the love and faith he has in the Lord. At this stage it is also believed that after experiencing the worldly realities it is then that the soul moves forward and realizes the way to surrender to Lord. For the mystic it is the path of love which leads him to his beloved. The path is of pain and pleasure but it is the zeal of the mystic which makes him move forward on this path.

The last state of “reunion” is different from the state of initial “union”. In this the soul is awakened to the Divine Truth. The soul which has undergone the struggle of separation is now one with the infinite Self. “The spiritual aspirant’s consciousness of his essential identity with the Ultimate involves the experiential awakening to a pre-existing condition of oneness or unity.” (Sinha, 49) The spiritual realization at this stage is so strong that soul feels the communion and hence declares his oneness with the Lord.

Thus the motifs used by the mystic poet in his poetry are linked with what he experiences. His reflection on nature, his surroundings and environment all show the changes he undergoes. In Waris Shah’s *Heer* the poet gives a very detailed description the passionate meeting of Heer and Ranjha. He mentions a variety of emotions the two feel during their first meeting- even nature and the atmosphere sing, sharing the joy of the two lovers. Even in the verses of Sufi poets like Bulleh Shah and others this initial union signifies the beginning of the spiritual journey under the guidance of their *pir*. This joy and happiness is soon shadowed with the clouds of sorrow when the separation of the two souls occurs. It maybe the separation of the two lovers in Waris Shah’s *Heer* or the separation of the disciple from his master as in the *kafis*

of Bulleh Shah. The poets reveal the emotions of sorrow and the turmoil that one undergoes in this phase of separation.

Separation is the phase which tests the mettle of love of the lovers. It is in separation that one gives away all the possessions and just longs for union with the beloved. It is in this phase that one detaches oneself from all worldly attachments and surrenders completely to God.

After the turmoil of separation and renunciation the lover then experiences the bliss of re-union. The worldly emotions attached to the union of the lover and the beloved are now transformed into the emotions of spiritual union. J. Mclean explains this as:

The Valley of Unity is then traversed. Through long renunciation and interior transformation, difference and diversity appear to dissolve - "the many here are merged into one; one form involves the multifarious, thick swarm". The sixth valley is of Bewilderment. Here, the fullness of Love takes over the heart of the pilgrim more completely, leaving even more confusion and uncertainty - "my heart is empty, yet with Love is full; my own love is to me incredible". The final place is the Valley of Poverty and Nothingness, where the pilgrim is "lame and deaf, the mind has gone, You enter an obscure oblivion" which "words cannot express". He writes that "Whoever sinks within this sea is blest and in self-loss obtains eternal rest". (McLean, Web)

A mystic's journey of *unio mystica* can also be understood by the seven stages which the soul undergoes on the spiritual path.

- *Talab* also known as yearning brings the desire of union with God in the heart of a mystic or a seeker.

- *Ishq* or love, also means that a person should give up all his desires and one should have complete faith in the Lord's altar.
- *Marfat* or enlightenment is a stage when the seeker is able to see the light of divinity in all objects of His creation.
- *Istaghraq* or absorption is a stage when the seeker has to completely surrender to Him.
- *Tauhid* when the seeker experiences God permeating in all.
- *Hairat* or amazement that the seeker experiences to acknowledge the purity of the soul as it is a part of Him.
- *Fuqr Wa Fana* or annihilation of ego; it is the stage when the self of the seeker is completely merged in the Supreme Soul.

The ultimate goal of the seeker is to merge in the Lord and when this happens it is then that the seeker is in a state of complete bliss. Love as depicted in the mystic poetry is able to show each of the phases described above.

**Chapter II:**  
**The Poets in the Making:**  
**Formative Years and Influences**

“Theologians may quarrel, but the mystics of the world speak the same language.”

— Meister Eckhart

Khushwant Singh in his seminal work *The History of the Sikhs* writes, “The Punjab, being the main gateway into India, was fated to be the perpetual field of battle and the first home of all the conquerors.” (K. Singh, 13) The Punjab of the medieval times stretched from (present day) Rawalpindi (Pakistan) in the North to Rohtak (India) in the South and from Uch (Pakistan) in the West to Seraj (India) in the East. Later the boundaries changed and finally the province was divided into different states after the partition of India in 1947. Punjab was thus regarded as the most centrally located state of India and was used as a prominent route and a place of settlement by the Arab crusaders, Turks and even by the Aryans in about 1500 B. C.

In the early sixth century A. D. Punjab had a “precarious position”, which was one of the important reasons for the advent of Islam in India. Historians like H. L. O. Garrett, G. S. Chhabra and Khushwant Singh point out that the state was divided into different parts and each part was ruled by its own ruler. Split up into small chieftainships, Punjab was open to foreign attacks. The rich resources of the land and the economic prosperity attracted foreign attention. After the persistent efforts to conquer Punjab, finally the Arab armies were able to conquer Sindh in 712 AD under the leadership of Muhammad bin Qasim. This defeat of Punjab at the hands of the Arab rulers brought great suffering to the people of India. When the Muslims conquered a non-muslim country they offered three alternatives to the vanquished people: to convert to Islam, to pay tax or *Jazia* and on resisting these to be put to death. (Chhabra, 1) Thousands of Hindus were put to death and also burnt alive. A number of Hindu temples were

demolished and Mosques were erected on the same foundation by the Muslim armies in order to establish Islam on the Indian soil. These hardships made a number of Hindus convert to Islam. Even the *Qazis* supported these inhumane actions of the Arab rulers. Defining Islam as the only pure religion of God, they encouraged the rulers to massacre Hindus or convert them to Islam. The Hindu women were captured by the Arab armies and were used for the pleasure of the rulers and their soldiers.

The same conditions prevailed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries under the leaderships of Sikander Lodhi, Babur, Sher Shah and even Salim Shah. The times only changed, in the second half of the sixteenth century when Akbar became the Mughal emperor. He adopted secular policies to rule and the *Qazis* had little role to play in the politics of the state. He encouraged the celebration of Hindu festivals and abolished all the taxes and activities of the government which humiliated the Hindus. (Chhabra, 55)

The origins of medieval Punjabi literature are closely tied with the socio-religious conditions that prevailed at the time. In spite of forced conversions it was difficult for Islam to be absorbed in the Indian soil, as Hinduism was the only religion followed on the land and the two ideologies were too divergent. However the two - Islam and Hinduism interacted well with the emergence of the two powerful movements— the Sufism and *Bhakti*. Both the movements were against the orthodox rituals and customs and promoted the idea of love for God. Both being inter related influenced one another and were subject to modifications. Some of the Hindu texts were translated into Persian for the education of Muslim literati and some Hindu scholars learnt Persian to have access to the Muslim texts. “Mutual contact, reaction and reconciliation between Hindu and Muslim traditions were thus noteworthy phenomena of the religious climate of contemporary Punjab.” (Puri, 3) As these two movements had a lot in common this became



one of the main reasons for the foundation of the Sikh religion. Prof. Darshan Singh Maini in his essay on “Guru Nanak and Sikhism” points out,

Armed with God’s Word, and robed in piety and humility, Guru Nanak set out to realise and preach the best of Hinduism and Islam. Sikhism was thus a birth child of the religious renaissance effected by the Bhakti and Sufi movements. Retaining its primal genes derived from Hinduism, Sikhism, nonetheless, acquired revolutionary mutations en route. The Islamic concepts of and precepts of monotheism, iconoclasm, corporate ethical responsibility, egalitarianism, personal conduct and commitment.... Synthesis was thus the conceptual matrix of Sikhism and may, therefore, be taken as perhaps the most vital formative trait of the new creed. (Maini, ed. Mohan Singh, 135)

As also highlighted by Joseph Davy Cunningham, “It was reserved for Nanak to perceive the true principles of reform, and to lay those broad foundations which enabled his successor Gobind to fire the minds of his countrymen with a new nationality, and to give practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal to the highest, in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes.” (Cunningham, 34)

Before Guru Nanak Dev Ji had established the Sikh religion, the nature of his religious sentiments can be understood with the help of the sects and the ideologies which were followed before him in the Punjab region. In the early period the *Siddhas* had a great influence on the religious temperament of the people. The extent of their reach can be observed with the number of compositions written by Guru Nanak that are addressed to the *Siddhas* of different sects. From the eleventh century onwards the *Hathayogis* had a greater influence and had reached their zenith in Punjab by the fifteenth century. Though the concept of the preceptor and a disciple was taught by the *yogis* but they had their orthodox beliefs and rituals which Guru Nanak did not agree with. He has commented vehemently on the lack of social responsibilities of the *yogis* and also the use of their miraculous powers by which they enticed the innocent people.

Sufism in Punjab is believed to have existed even before the establishment of the Ghaznavi Empire on the state. Some of the popular shrines and orders of the Sufis are said to have evolved from Punjab. The importance given to the *pir* or the master by the Sufis was one of the basic postulates of the teachings of the Sufis. The love for the master was also a prominent idea depicted in their works. Therefore on the spiritual path Sufis gave utmost importance to the guidance of the *pir* or else it was believed that the disciple was guided by Satan. The clashes between the *Nathayogis* and Sufis in the early thirteenth century showed how each wanted to outdo the other. The common denominator which led to the interaction of the two clans was the use of local dialects spoken in Punjab in their works which had a direct appeal to the common masses.

Punjabi Literature is an important branch of Indian Literature. Evolved from the influence of a number of literatures starting from Vedic Literature to the love songs of the Sufi poets, Punjabi Literature shows a diversity and uniqueness of its own. The Punjabi language is said to have evolved from *Prakrit*. A number of researchers like Bhai Jodh Singh, Grierson. F. E. Keay and Kaka Saheb Kalekar have converged to a conclusion that the Punjabi language forms one of the oldest languages of India like Marathi tracing its evolution back to 1000 B.C. They have also shown the similarity between some of the words of Sanskrit and Punjabi. It is believed that when *Prakrit* had lost its importance in Indian writings it was later called *Apabramsha*. (Kohli, 3) The Punjabi Language evolved from it. The term *Punjabi* was first given by the Muslim poet Hafiz Barkhurdar as its roots lay in the state of Punjab. (Kohli, 4) The prominent dialects of Punjabi include *Lehendi*, *Majhi*, *Doabi*, *Malawi*, *Bhatiani*, *Dogri* and *Pawadhi*. *Lehendi* is the language of Western Punjab (present day Pakistan). It has been used in the compositions of Baba Farid. *Majhi* is regarded as the standard dialect and is used in almost all of the literature of Punjab. It is also known as Central (or *Kendri*) Punjabi. Though *Sant-bhasha* used during the *Bhakti* Movement had an influence over the compositions of the age but it is central Punjabi which was chiefly used. It was also chosen by the Sufi poets like Shah

Hussain, Bulleh Shah, and Waris Shah. The first compositions in Punjabi were made available to us through the writings of Sheikh Farid also known as Baba Farid in twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These were followed by a wide variety of works in the language.

As the Muslim invaders conquered Punjab, the Sufi poets made use of the *Shahmukhi* script in their works. Later on with the contribution of the Sikh Gurus a standard script called *Gurmukhi* was formulated. “*Shahmukhi* was identified with the Muslim Punjabis, *Gurmukhi* was identified with the Sikh Punjabis and *Devanagri* was identified with Hindu Punjabis.” (K. Singh, n.p.) It was Guru Nanak Dev who first used the thirty-five letters of the *Gurmukhi* script in an acrostic called *Patti* or tablet which is present in the *Raag Asa* of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Guru Sahab gave meaning to each of the letters present in the *Gurmukhi* script. Each sound has its own spiritual meaning and symbolical significance attached to it. As Navtej Sarna explains, “Each stanza begins with one of the thirty-five letters of the *Gurmukhi* alphabet in serial order, and expounds eternal truths.” (Sarna, 29) This script was later used by Guru Arjun Dev in the writing of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

Professor Darshan Singh Maini appropriately puts it as, “... the history of Punjabi poetry is the history of the Punjabi language.” (Maini, 1) Though the literary works in Punjabi evolved from the vernaculars of Punjab written by the *Nathyogis* in the days of Gorakhnath (940-1031) but the language gained prominence and lustre when it became the poetic language of the Sufis and the Sikh Gurus. For the present study of Punjabi literature starting from Baba Farid to the *Qissa* Poetry, Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli, one of the prominent researchers of Punjabi Literature has divided the works available in Punjabi in his *History of Punjabi Literature* as follows:

- **Pre-Nanak Age** – Approximately from ninth to fifteenth century,

- **The Age of Guru Nanak Dev - 1469-1708, and**
- ***Qissa Poetry* - 1709-1799.**

In the Pre- Nanak Age, Punjabi literature had its foundation in the writings of the *Nathyogis*. The *Nathyogis* had control over the religious beliefs of the people in this age. Almost all of India was influenced by the *Nathyogis*. Guru Gorakh Nath is regarded as their chief and his name is attached to various other sects that were prevalent in India during the early ninth and tenth centuries. It is believed that the *Nathyogis* did not introduce any new ideas or religious thoughts but only propagated what had been a part of the traditional thought since ancient times. The *Nathyogis* had expertise over *Yoga*. They promoted *Yoga* practices amongst the masses but the people had a general sense of fear for the *Nathyogis*. The *yogis* exhibited certain miraculous powers with the practice of *yoga* which made them less popular with the general public. The technique of *pranayama* (breath control) and *Samadhi* had to be followed, also known as *Hathayoga*. It is the purification of the body through breath control. The book *Yoga Darshan* is regarded as the chief work of the *Nathyogis* as it tells about the different postures of yoga and their benefits.

The *shalokas* and *banis* of Gorakhnath form the core of Nath literature. Not much information is available about the place of birth and the birth and death dates of Gorakhnath, though in the *Janamsakhis* of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, meetings between Guru Sahab with Gorakhnath have been referred to. Dr. Pitambar Dutt Barthwal, one of the chief editors of Gorakhnath's compositions, states that a lot of diversity in the language and compositions of Gorakhnath can be found. As the saint moved to various places in India, different dialects and styles were added to his works. Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli states, "In his poems we find the vocabulary used earlier by the Siddhas and also Shaivas and Shaktas in their Agunas and Tantra.... We also find the elements of *Bhakti* in the *banis* of Gorakhnath. The language also

resembles *Sant Bhasha*, which was used by the Sikh Gurus and radical saints.” (Kohli, 7) The writings of Gorakh Nath depict the methods of mind-control and also the importance of meditating on the name of the Supreme Lord. The nine Nath Gurus of the *Nathyogis* are: Nagarjun, Jar Bharat, Harish Chander, Patya Nath, Bhim Nath, Gorakh Nath, Charpat, Jalandhar and Malyarjun. (Kohli, 8) When the *Nathyogis* came to Punjab, a number of Muslims had converted themselves to the Nath sect. As the Nath sect emphasised on realisation of God and no idol worship, a number of Muslims were attracted by these religious beliefs. Some literature of the *Nathyogis* is said to have been written in *Shaurseni*, *Apabhramsha* and *Sahaskriti*. Some of the Nath saints have also been quoted by Guru Nanak Dev Ji in his verses like *Charpat*, etc.

Few traces of these earliest forms of Punjabi Literature are to be found. Punjabi Literature in its true sense is therefore said to have commenced with the Sufi verses of Sheikh Farid ud- Din Ganj-i-Shakar also popularly known as Baba Farid (1173-1265). At a time when the entire nation was undergoing a turbulent time, Baba Farid taught the lesson of love for God to mankind. As Sadhu Santideva writes about Baba Farid,

The saint was an enlightened soul. Like all other great saints of India, Baba Farid realised God as ‘an all-embracing personality present in his ethical, intellectual and aesthetic experience and furnishing the inspiration for creating an ideal realm of values- the kingdom of heaven in distress and struggle.’ The saint was always in a blissful state of mind. (Santideva, 15)

Sheikh Farid’s ancestors came from Kabul but migrated to Punjab in the middle of the twelfth century. Baba Farid’s father Qazi Shu’aib was made the Qazi of Khatwat, a small town in Multan, by the then Ghazniwad Sultan of Punjab. Baba Farid’s father was a great scholar, but it was the saint’s mother, Kulsum Bibi, who exerted more influence in the making of his religious life as a pious Sufi saint. He could constantly meditate without being effected by sleep or

hunger in a place behind the mosque of Khatwal. The townsfolk believed him to be a deranged pupil and talked about his strange habits to Sheikh Jalal ud' Din Tabiri.

At the age of eighteen, Baba Farid shifted to Multan for higher studies. Multan attracted a number of eminent scholars from Iran and Baghdad. Baba Farid joined a seminary at the mosque of Maulana Minhaju'd- Din- Firmizi, where he met Khwaja Qutubu'd- Din Bakhtiyar Kaki and asked to be his *khalifa* (disciple). After the Khwaja left for Delhi, Baba Farid followed him to Delhi. In Delhi, Baba Farid was initiated into the distinguished group of Sufis who resided in Khawaja's *jama'at-khana*.

Baba Farid lived in a small cell near the *jama'at-khana* where he performed severe ascetic exercises under the guidance of Khwaja Qutubu'd Din Bakhtiyar Kaki. Due to his religious practices, Baba Farid came to be noticed by Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, "the greatest name among the Muslim men of God belonging to the time." (Sekhon, 17) Impressed by Baba Farid's practices, he suggested to Khwaja Qutubu'd Din Bakhtiyar Kaki to pray for his disciple's future greatness. But Baba Farid was not satisfied with the spiritual practices he had been performing. He tried to practice harder penance. He asked his master if he could practice *chilla*, which involved spiritual exercises and fasting for forty days. Along with fasting for forty days the person observing *chilla* also had to tie himself round the leg and suspend himself head down in a well. Baba Farid observed the *chilla* in its true sense.

The title "Ganj-i-Shakar" was given to Baba Farid for his experience while undergoing the *chilla*. Though the story has been given a number of implications but most of the researchers believe that while observing the severe penance of *chilla*. Baba experienced extreme pangs of hunger because of which he ate as many pebbles he could find in the well and filled his mouth. These pebbles changed to sugar or *shakar*. Thinking it to be the doing of the devil he spat them

out. When he felt hungry again he repeated his action, the pebbles were again converted to sugar. He continued to pray and it was on the approval of his master that he accepted the sugar as a gift from the unseen world. He was then called “Ganj-i-Shakar.” (Rizvi, 140)

Baba Farid’s spiritual exercises and the rewards he received made him an eminent Sufi saint and his fame spread far and wide. His growing popularity in Delhi became a hindrance for his prayers and meditation. From Delhi he left for Hansi in the Hissar district. Being absent from Delhi he could not be at the side of his master, Khwaja Qutubu’d Din Bakhtiyar Kaki when he died. Saiyid Attar Abbas Rizvi states that Baba Farid after five days of his master’s death was given the relics of Khwaja Qutubu’d Din Bakhtiyar Kaki including his *Khirqa*, turban, stick and wooden sandals, which implied that Baba Farid was to be the spiritual successor of Kaki in Delhi.

From Hansi, Baba Farid finally settled in Ajodhan, in Pak Pattan (now in Pakistan) in 1236 where he remained till his death in 1265. At Ajodhan his religious practices were mocked at by the local Qazi. He then settled in a small *jama’t- khana* on the outskirts of Ajodhan. The *jama’t- khana* consisted of a thatched hall and a small cell for Baba Farid to perform his prayers and meditation. The *jama’t- khana*, was situated on the main route to the city, therefore it received a number of visitors from all over the world. As Saiyid Attar Abbas Rizvi mentions, “Discussions in the *jama’t- khana* were liberal and covered all aspects of Sufism. Baba Farid also participated but he gave others the opportunity to express their own opinions freely.” (Rizvi, 143)

Baba Farid had a number of *Khalifas* (disciples). Of them Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi was prominent. Auliya’s spiritual practices were known far and wide as were his master’s. Baba Farid died at the age of ninety- three, in 1265 and was buried at Pak Patan in Punjab, where his

'urs is celebrated on the fifth Muharram every year. His mausoleum consists of a door, called *Bhishti Darwaza*, the Door of Paradise, which opens only on the day of his 'urs, on this occasion his devotees make a point of passing through it. (Subhan, 220)

S R Sharda in her book, *Sufi Thought: Its Development in Punjab and its Impact of Punjabi Literature from Baba Farid to AD 1850*, has divided the Sufism that developed in India into two different groups. The former Sufi Movement comprising early poets like Baba Farid, Bahauddin Zakriya, Khwaja Bhakhtiyar Kaki and others was known as the Ijadist Sufism. The Ijadist Sufism dominated on the Indian sub-continent from the advent of Sufism in India till about 1398 AD. Sharda highlights the following characteristics of Ijadist Sufism:

- **Lack of Latitudinarianism:** As mentioned before, the early Muslims were keen to make Hindus convert to Islam, as they believed Islam to be the only pure religion of God. It is said that even Baba Farid, being a staunch Sufi had locked a Hindu for three days and freed him only after he promised to be converted to Islam.
- **Emphasis on the knowledge of *Sharia't*:** For spiritual development it is very important for the Sufi to have a thorough knowledge of the religion. Baba Farid believed that before spiritual development it is the religious knowledge that lays the foundation of spiritual growth.
- **God is Transcendent and Personal:** The Sufis believed God to be the Absolute and Immanent but their devotion towards God was for a personal and transcendental God. God is therefore both hidden and apparent.



- **Obscurity in Expression and Duality of Man and God:** The Ijadist Sufis believed that God is immanent and He prevails in all. But they declared that man and God are different in essence. They called God the creator of the soul but soul for them has not emanated from God.
- **Love means Obedience:** The love depicted by these poets is that of a servant for his master and not of a lover for his beloved. The Ijadists believed in obedience to God, they would spend their time in the remembrance of God's name and would also say their daily prayers. "Farid Ganj-i-Shakar says that so far as man does not know his self, he runs after others, but when he becomes perfect in love of God or realizes gnosis of God he does not care even for the angels standing nearby him... . Thus love for God means devotional quest of knowledge of God." (Sharda, 88)

Being one of the representative poets of the Ijadist Sufism Baba Farid emphasised on the realization of God by giving up worldly pleasures. Therefore he followed a strict code of conduct, lived a life of poverty and even had to face times of extreme starvation and hunger. Pashaura Singh rightly highlights the above mentioned characteristics of Ijadists Sufis with reference to the *bani* of Farid. He states,

The image of Sheikh Farid that emerges in the Farid-bani is that of an ardent follower of orthodox Islam. He prescribes the duty to observe the ritual prayer (*namaz*, *nivaj* in Punjabi) five times a day, to perform ablutions (*wazu*, *uju* in the original text) before prayer and to go to the mosque (*masit*) regularly. He places much emphasis on 'prostration before God' during the ritual prayer which reminds one of the Qur'anic verses: 'Prostrate and draw near' (Sura 96:19). Like a stern Sufi Master, he even specifies the penalty for the offenders by saying that the head (*sir*) that does not prostrate before the Lord should be cut off and used under the cooking pot. (P. Singh, 47-48)

Baba Farid himself was a prolific writer and scholar. He wrote excellent poetry in Arabic, Persian and the local *Lehandi* dialect of Punjab. Baba Farid's hymns and *shalokas* had the power to mesmerize even the Sikh Gurus. His hymns were preserved by Sheikh Ibrahim and some of his ancestors who occupied the Farid *gaddi* after Baba Farid's demise. These hymns and *shalokas* (about one hundred and thirty-four in number) were given to Guru Nanak Dev by Sheikh Ibrahim. They were later included in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* by Guru Angad Dev in three different sections. The hymns and *shalokas* of Baba Farid centre round the themes of transience and mortality, sin and suffering, self and pride, illusion and reality, pity and love, longing and nostalgia, alienation and fulfilment. As Professor Darshan Singh Maini points out, "In *shaloka* after *shaloka*, one finds evidence of an awakened and aching soul in deep torment over the miserable state of man, pondering the path of self-realization in a world designed to defeat such a quest." (Maini, 13) Professor Maini rightly compares the mystic quality of Baba Farid's writings to that of William Blake. Blake emphasised on the "cleansed" vision for the experience of Godhead and the same idea of the vision of the "doors of paradise" is to be found in the verses of Baba Farid.

Punjabi Literature sees a lull period of nearly two centuries (roughly between thirteenth to fifteenth centuries), which is the time period between Baba Farid and Guru Nanak Dev Ji. It is only after the birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji that Punjabi Literature found its first literary genius. Guru Sahab converted a common language into the language of poetic beauty. During these two centuries Punjab underwent a time of constant stress and storm as the dynasties kept changing and the conquerors from the western pass continued to invade India. A number of heroic narratives or poems were composed by the warriors who participated in these wars. These heroic narratives or poetry are called *Var* in Punjabi. Due to constant disturbances during this period these heroic narratives could not be preserved. But these *Var* or heroic narratives have been mentioned in the religious *Vars* composed by the Sikh Gurus, which are present in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. The *Vars* mentioned are:

- **Var of Tunda Asraja:** Referred to in the beginning of Guru Nanak Dev's *Var Asa*.
- **Var of Sikander Ibrahim:** Referred to in the beginning of Guru Amar Das' *Var Gujri*.
- **Rai Kamaldi Maujdi ki Var:** Referred to in the beginning of Guru Arjan Dev's *Var Gujri*.
- **Var of Lalla Behlima:** Referred to in the beginning of Guru Ram Das's *Var Vadhans*.
- **Var of Rai Mehma Hasna:** Referred to in the beginning of Guru Ram Das's *Var Sarang*.
- **Var Musa:** Referred to in the beginning of Guru Ram Das's *Var Kanra*.

The stories of these *Vars* are available but the texts are available only in parts. Each *Var* has its *raga* according to which it can also be sung. About the language and style of the *Vars*, Sant Singh Sekhon and Kartar Singh Duggal mention, "The language as well as style of these ballads is that of West Punjab, their common characteristics of a feudal society are illicit passion, famine, drought, help by a neighbour, breach of promise, treachery and clan rivalry." (Sekhon, 26)

Taimur's invasion in 1398 AD marked the end of organized government in Northern India. (K. Singh, 28) Protests, massacres and destruction of the places of worship were prominent during the period. The caste system became even more rigorous. In such troubled times was born Guru Nanak Dev on April 15, 1469. The Sikh legends state that even the heavens rejoiced the birth of Guru Nanak. As Puran Singh writes,

He came like a song of Heaven, and began singing as he felt the touch of the breeze and saw the blue expanse of the sky. He was a child of smiles, and his eyes were silent and wise; he loved quiet of soul. ... A thrill of unknown delight came to anyone who lifted the child, or played with him. But none knew whence came to him that gladness of soul. (Puran Singh, 21)

If Sheikh Farid marked the beginning of Punjabi Literature, Guru Nanak Dev ji and the Sikh Gurus who followed, mark the zenith of Punjabi literature. When Guru Nanak Dev was born, Punjab was under the control of Behlol Lodhi of the Lodhi Dynasty who was a tactful and devious ruler. He was succeeded by Sikander Lodhi (1489-1517) for whom Guru Nanak Dev ji had written in *Var of Majjh, Shaloka 1*:

*Kali Kaati raje kasai Dharam pankh kar udariya,  
Kudu amavas sach chandrma desai naah kahe chidiya.  
Hau bhal vikuni hui  
Aadhare rahu na koi  
Vich haume kar dukh royi  
Kahu Nanak kin bhidh gat hoyi. (SGGS, 145)*  
Kings are butchers, cruelty their knife,  
Justice has taken wings and fled.  
Falsity prevails and the moon of truth,  
Is visible nowhere.  
I have tried myself in searching about,  
But in the darkness no path is visible,  
The world is suffering an endless pain in ego.  
How shall it be saved? Said Nanak. (SGGS, 145)

Though a number of records of the events in the life of Guru Nanak Dev are available in the form of *janamsakhis* written by some prominent Sikh scholars in *Gurmukhi* but the English account of Guru Sahab's life was first written by Raja Sir Daljit Singh and then by S. R. S. Thapur in the twentieth century. These are also based on the traditional *Gurmukhi* accounts. (Chhabra, 53) Guru Nanak Dev Ji was born in a village called Rai Bhoi di Talwandi, now named Nanakana Sahib about forty miles from Lahore. His father Mehta Kalian Das Bedi, also known as Mehta Kalu was an accountant in the village and his mother Mata Tripta Ji was a

humble woman. It was Guru Nanak Dev Ji's elder sister Nanaki, who first saw the markings of a great saint in Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak Dev was a prodigious child. At the age of five he was inquisitive about the purpose of life. At the age of seven he was sent to a *pandit* to learn the alphabet and numerals and then to a Muslim *Mullah* to learn Persian and Arabic. He took little interest in his studies but spent most of his time discoursing with the holy men. Guru Nanak's growing tendency to withdraw into silence and solitude worried his father Mehta Kalu, because of which he gave the young boy the duty to graze the buffaloes in the fields. But the habit of meditation did not change. At the age of twelve, Guru Nanak's marriage was arranged by his parents to Sulakhani, daughter of Mool Chand Chona. It was later when Guru Nanak was nineteen that she came to live with him. In 1494, Guru Nanak's first child Sri Chand was born and Lakhmi Das three years later. (K. Singh, 31)

When Guru Nanak failed to show any interest in worldly affairs, his father grew despondent. Guru Nanak's sister then brought him to her home where through her husband's influence Guru Nanak got a job as the accountant in the office of Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi. Though Nanak did his job diligently it never interested him. At Sultanpur a Muslim minstrel, Mardana, joined Guru Nanak and the two began to organize the singing of hymns in the town. (K. Singh, 31)

It is believed that one morning when Guru Nanak went to bathe in the River Bein in Sultanpur, he had his first mystic experience. He disappeared in the waters of the river and reappeared after three days, a changed man with the message of God reverberating in him. Navtej Sarna describes it as,

The *janamsakhis* explain the disappearance as a mystical communion with the Almighty. In the court of God, His grace was bestowed upon him as Nanak was given the cup of the truthful name and robe of honour. It is during this experience... that Nanak uttered the lines which form the essence of his message, the first stanza of the Japji. (Sarna, 45)

The words of *Mool Mantra* are as follows:

*Ik oa(n)kaar sath naam karathaa purakh nirabho niravair akaal moorath  
ajoonnee saibha(n) gur prasaadh ||*

*|| Jap ||*

*aadh sach jugaadh sach || hai bhee sach naanak hosee bhee sach ||1||* (SGGS, 1)

By the Grace of the One Supreme Being, The Eternal, the All-prevading *Purusha*, the Creator, Without Fear, Without Hate, The Being Beyond time, Not-incarnated, Self-existent, The Enlightner.

Meditations

True in the Beginning, True the Primeval age,

True He is and True He shall be. (SGGS, 1)

Guru Nanak Dev taught the message of oneness of the soul. He always said “There is no Hindu no *Mussalman*.” After his spiritual awakening, he could not stay in one place. He went around the country to spread the message he had received from God. In the year 1496 at the age of twenty seven, Guru Nanak left Sultanpur and made it his duty to spread the word of the Lord. At a time when there was no mode of transport available, Guru Nanak travelled on foot to almost all parts of Northern and Eastern India up to Assam and also to Mecca and Medina.

The next thirty years or so, Guru Nanak had spent in travelling in India spreading the message of Lord. He breathed his last in the city of Kartarpur in the year 1539 at the age of about seventy years. He had established his own creed and laid the foundation of the religion which was later known as the Sikh *Dharma*. After Guru Nanak Dev, his disciple Lehna, who

Guru Sahab renamed to Guru Angad Dev took charge of the task of spreading the message of the Lord.

Guru Nanak lived at a time when the *Bhakti* Movement had started to grow in the Northern regions of India. In Punjab, Guru Nanak became the torch bearer of the *Bhakti* Movement. Where the evils of caste system, idol worship and rituals were making people blind followers of a particular faith, Guru Nanak promoted the notions of monotheistic worship, casteless society and the idea that by concentrating on the *Naam* and through *Sahaj* one can get closer to God. Guru Nanak's teachings are present in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, as a vast collection of revelatory verses recorded in *Gurmukhi*. Guru Nanak describes the dangers of egotism and calls upon his devotees to engage in worship through the word of God. The word of God cleanses the individual and makes such worship possible. Guru Nanak warned his followers against hypocrisy and falsehood saying that these are pervasive in humanity. Guru Nanak Dev's teachings can thus be understood to be practised in three ways:

- ***Vand Chhakkna***: Sharing with others, helping those who are in need
- ***Kirat Karna***: Earning/making a living honestly, without exploitation or fraud
- ***Naam Japna***: Chanting the Holy Name and thus remembering God at all times. (K. Singh, 47)

The crux of his teaching was equality of mankind without distinction of caste or creed. He also started the institution of *langar* or free kitchen, where people can sit together to eat without any distinction. Guru Nanak also believed in the equality of men and women.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji's compositions are to be found in different *Ragas*. These are divided according to *padas* (Stanza), *ashtapadis* (eight line stanza form). The longer hymns which follow the style of the folk songs are *chant*, *birhara*, *pahare*, *solhe* and *savayya*. In the end the *banis* and *vars* of Guru Sahab are included in the *Raga*, while other compositions are included in miscellaneous sections of *shalokas*, *pauris*. The *Japji Sahib* is placed outside the *Raga* division.

The scholars of Punjabi Language agree that the compositions of Guru Nanak Dev can be divided according to the language. The compositions can be divided into *Apabramsha*, *Hindawi* and Punjabi which also shows the gradual development of the Punjabi language in Punjab. In some compositions the three dialects have been used together. The compositions have a metrical pattern but a number of variations can be observed by the readers. The length of the stanzas as well as the pause may vary in some compositions.

The themes of Guru Sahab's poetry are religious. Guru Nanak's *Jap* is regarded as the most important work of the Sikh doctrine. Though a number of scholars have tried to give their own interpretation to the *Japji Sahib* but as Sant Singh Sekhon and Kartar Singh Duggal state, "it is the reader's intuition that can help him imbibe the message." (Sekhon, 30)

The *Siddha Goshti*, *Dakhni Onkar* and also the *Vars* in *Raag Asa* form the core compositions of Guru Nanak Dev. Though a number of other verses are present in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. GS Chhabra describes the incomparable brilliance of Guru Nanak Dev and states:

A multi-faceted genius. The most learned man of his time. God's own inspired poet, with God- intoxicated, God-immersed and God-filled poetry of alluring lilt and rhythm, grace of style and beauty of diction. A master-musician, a great philosopher and a great saint. (Chhabra, 117)



After Guru Nanak Dev, Punjabi Literature was further enriched by the poetry of the Sikh Gurus who came after him- Guru Angad Dev (1504-1552), Guru Amar Das (1479-1574), Guru Ram Das (1534-1581), Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606). Guru Arjan Dev began the compilation of the Holy *Granth*, in order to maintain the originality of the verses and teachings given by his ancestors to carry forward the legacy for his successors. Guru Arjan Dev started with the work in a small cell in Ramsar, with the help from Bhai Gurdas and Baba Budha Ji (the oldest living disciple of Guru Nanak). When the Holy *Granth* was ready it was installed at the Sri Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar and Bhai Budha Ji was appointed as the first custodian of the Holy *Granth*. Later the Holy *Granth* was redictated by Guru Gobind Singh who incorporated the verses of Guru Tegh Bahadur in the Holy *Granth*. Although Guru Gobind Singh also had many compositions to his credit he did not include them in the Holy *Granth*.

The hymns in the Holy *Granth* have been arranged in various *Ragas* according to the system of Hindustani Music. The hymns are according to the musical measure and are therefore arranged in a chronological order, the compositions of the *Bhaktas* following them towards the completion of every *raga*. There are approximately 6,000 hymns in thirty one different *Ragas*.

In the beginning of the fifteenth century, even Sufism underwent a marked change of ideology. The early orthodox temperament of the Muslims had now changed. The contact with the Hindu Vaishnava Vedantic *Bhaktas* of the *Bhakti* Movement and also the *Yoga* practices taught by the *Nathyogis* had a powerful impact on the Sufis. They imbibed the principles of Monism and wifely love and devotion for the Almighty from Hindu Vaishnava Vedantic *Bhaktas* in their philosophy. The main characteristics of the Panjabi Vedantic Sufism as given by SR Sharda are:

- Unity of God and Man

- Concept of God- transcendental and immanent
- Grace of God
- Guidance of the Guru, *Pir* or *Murshid*
- Love and its Supremacy over everything
- Wifely Devotion (Sharda, 100-102)

The works of the Punjabi Sufi poets of the sixteenth century, revolved round their love for the Almighty. Their poems reflected their yearning for union with the Lord. In later Punjabi Sufi poetry the human soul is the lover and God is the Beloved (masculine or feminine as imagined by the poet) from whom the soul is separated by the power of *Maya* or illusion. The soul of a Sufi always cries for union with Lord. The Sufi poets use the image of Heer, Sohni or Sassi to reflect their agony of separation from the beloved. The three females are the prominent figures of the *Qissa* or legends of Punjab. As Lajwanti Rama Krishna mentions,

...the heroines, Hir, Sassi and Sohni, who spent their lives in sorrow, always yearning to meet their respective lovers, were united with them in death. For a Sufi these tales have a spiritual significance. The heroines stand for the Sufi (the soul) and the heroes for God (the Beloved sought). After the Sufi has attained union with God he is no more Hir but becomes Ranjha, because for him all differences vanish away and he sees Ranjha (God) as much in his own self as in the external world. (Krishna, PDF File)

These poets depict the change of mood in the three phases of union, separation and re-union with the Lord. They made use of everyday symbols like the spinning wheel, boat, dowry, temple, flute, etc to convey their feelings of separation and of joy when the soul would unite with the Lord. They made use of *Kafi*, *Baramaha*, *Athwara*, *Siharfi*, *Doha*, *Baint*, and *Deuth* as the poetic forms for their verses. Some of the prominent Sufi poets of Punjab of the seventeenth century are Shah Hussain, Sultan Bahu and Bulleh Shah.

Bulleh Shah (1680-1758) is considered to be one of the greatest poets of Punjab. His *Kafis* are not only widely read and appreciated by the readers of all times but some of his *Kafis* have also been put to music, and are immensely popular as Sufi songs both in India and also across the border. Bulleh Shah, though named Abdullah Shah, was born in the village of Uch Gilaniyan in Bahawalpur State now in Pakistan in the family of Saiyyids. But his family stayed in the village for just six months. They then shifted to Malakwal, from where they moved to Pandoke where his father Shah Mohammed Dervish was made the preacher of a local mosque and a school teacher for young children.

Bulleh Shah's childhood was spent under the care of his father in Pandoke. He received his early education from his father who was well versed in Arabic, Persian and the Holy Quran. Later, Bullah Shah was sent to Qasur, which was regarded as the educational hub of the time. In Qasur were renowned teachers like Hazrat Ghulam Murtaza and Maulana Mohiyuddin. Bulleh Shah became a pupil of Hazrat Ghulam Murtaza and won his affection with his 'innate intelligence' and 'moral inclination.' When Bulleh Shah grew older it is said that as a pupil he went in search of his master. Having heard of the greatness of Shah Inayat, Bulleh Shah decided to meet him. Though a number of legends are attached to Bulleh Shah's meeting with Shah Inayat but in his verses he says that he thanks his stars for being accepted as Shah Inayat's disciple.

Lajwanti Rama Krishna states that the spiritual life of Bulleh Shah is divided into three periods. The first period is when the learning process of Bulleh Shah begins. The poetry written in this phase is rich in metaphors and style but lacks depth. Though this period was short but it marked the beginning of Bulleh Shah's mystic experiences. The poetic works of this period are hardly available. The second phase began soon after the end of the first. In this phase the

influence of the *Bhakti* writers can be prominently observed in his works. In this stage he realizes the importance of a Guru and places him on the same pedestal as God.

*Bhave tu jan na jan ve vehre a var mere*  
*Mai tere kurban ve vehre a var mere*  
*Tere jiha mainu horn a koi dhunda jangai beli rohi*  
*Dhunda ta sara jahan ve vehre a var mere*  
*Mai tere kurban ve vehre a var mere*  
 Whether You know it or not, pray, walk into my courtyard!  
 I am a sacrifice unto You; pray, walk into my courtyard!  
 There is no one like You for me;  
 I have searched forests, jungles and deserts.  
 Indeed, I have searched the whole world;  
 Pray, walk into my courtyard! (Bulleh Shah, 41)

The third phase marks the over-all development of Bulleh Shah as a Sufi saint. His writings are mature and show the influence of no particular sect or movement. His ideology is independent and his writings convey his mystic experiences. Lajwanti Rama Krishna states, "...Bulleh Shah appears to have obtained the *advaita* conception of God soon after his initiation into Sufism, because his poetry abounds in this strain. Among the Indian Sufis we hardly find another who beheld God as clearly in all creation, bad or good, as Bulleha did." (Krishna, PDF File)

In his verses Bulleh Shah mentions a number of prophets, Hindu gods like Rama, and most particularly Krishna. Also he was conscious of the differences and disputes between the Hindus and Muslims during his time, and hence he spread the message that God cannot be defined through temples and mosques, he is all-pervading.

Such knowledge has been ignited within me,  
 A Hindu or a Muslim I have ceased to be.  
 Love alone is acceptable to me.  
 It is lover alone who realizes the Lord. (Bulleh Shah, 45)

Bulleh Shah's poems depict his love for the Lord. The pain of separation and longing for union is so prominently depicted that an erotic tone has been adopted by the poet to convey his feelings. He addresses his lover as a '*thug*', 'a trickster' who has hidden himself after giving his first glimpse to his lover. The final re-union is the state of extreme ecstasy for the poet. He gains humility as the hardships of separation make him realize the importance of true devotion to the Lord. JR Puri and TR Shangari state,

The path of the mystics is the path of love. Their love is one-pointed, fixed only on their Master or on God. They are so lost in the object of their devotion, that they become oblivious to all else. A true lover of God identifies his own will with will of God. Whatever comes from Him is cherished. (Puri, 22)

Bulleh Shah's language and versification are simple to understand. His *kafis* are melodious. The repeated symbols and motifs he has used in his verses intensify the experiences he undergoes on the mystical path.

From 1709- 1799, Punjabi Literature was enhanced with the popular *Qissas* of Punjab, *Qissa* poetry is a part of the rich traditional background of India. The poetic narratives of the tragic love stories of India have been a part of Indian Literature for a very long time. The same tradition was present in the Persian or Arabic literature which soon percolated into the Indian sub-continent. The prominent stories taken from the Arabic and Persian traditions are *Laila Majnu*, *Yusuf Zulaikhan* and *Shirin Farhad*. From the Indian tradition the Punjabi *Qissas* were inspired from the folk tales of *Heer Ranjha*, *Sassi Puhnu*, *Mirza Sahiban* and *Sohni Mahiwal*.

According to some historians it was the Persian folk tale of *Yusuf Zulaikhan* which marked the beginning of these poetic narratives. But it was Nizami (1184-1292) who first gave the colour of mysticism to the love tragedies of *Shirin Farhad* and *Laila Majnu*. In India the

theme of these narratives was related to “religious thoughts, adventures of heroes and pure sexual love.” (Sharda, 188) Before the Punjabi Sufis began the writing of *Qissas* it was used by the North western poets for heroic narratives. These were based on the themes of chivalry, jealousy, love, elopement, etc. However these narratives were given religious connotations by the Sufi poets of Punjab. SR Sharda explains, “The lover of the girl and the hero of the battle field was made a lover of God. He fights against his enemies, the *nafs* and its allies which are represented by the parents and the in-laws and successfully elopes his beloved the *ruh*, the Divine element.” (Sharda, 189)

Punjabi *Qissa* poetry is said to have begun with the *Heer* of Damodar Gulati and *Mirza Sahiban* by Peelu, both of which were compiled in the early seventeenth century. Peelu’s *Mirza Sahiban* is free from the impact of Sufism and therefore comes in the category of heroic poetry. Damodar’s *Heer* is considered to be a product of Sufism and Nathism. But it is Hafiz Barkhudar who is said to have made love a prominent feature of *Qissa* poetry in his *Qissas of Mirza Sahiban, Yusuf Zulaikhan and Sassi Punnu*. The *Qissakars* that followed in their trend are Muqbal, Waris Shah, Hamid and latest were Miran Shah and Mohammad Buta of the nineteenth century.

Waris Shah (1735-1784) and his *Heer* are said to have immortalized the genre of *Qissa* Poetry in Punjabi Literature. Little is known of Waris Shah’s early life. He was born in the village Jandiala Sherkhan, now in the district of Gujtanwala in Pakistan in a Sayyid family. His father’s name was Gul Sher Shah. Waris Shah had lost his parents at a very young age. Feeling oppressed by his two elder brothers, he left home and moved to Qasur where he became a disciple of *pir* Makhdum. He had a good education in Islamic texts, grammar and writing as can be observed with the number of references and allusions made by him in his only surviving epical work *Heer*.

Sant Singh Sekhon and Kartar Singh Duggal comment on the rich style of Waris Shah and state:

Waris Shah.....uses the language of central Punjab with just a smattering of the western dialect. He uses the knowledge of Islamic texts by interspersing *Ayats* or verses from the Quran to make his point. The tenor of his diction is loud, foxy, even foul. At the same time it shows considerable urbanity and sophistication. (Sekhon, 79)

The descriptions given by the writer bring out the minute details of Punjab's rustic life and are picturesque. The attention of the reader is instantly captured. The poet adds the element of humour, wit and excitement when Heer and Ranjha meet for the first time. The atmosphere however becomes gloomy, pathetic and sad when the lovers are separated. The change in the tone, scenario and setting is so smooth that readers also feel the emotions and sorrow the protagonists undergo in the epic.

The *Qissakars* were against the orthodoxy of the Qazis and Mullahs of the time. The *Qissa of Heer* depicts the Qazi as cruel and ignorant. For lovers love is the greatest gift of heaven. Therefore Heer shows extreme detestation towards the Qazi as she is stopped from meeting Ranjha. Love, regarded as the most superior path that reaches God in Sufism, has been idolized by the *Qissa* writers. The mystic element is added to the tragic story when the readers understand the yearning of the lover for her beloved as the soul separated from the Lord. Thus in the end when the lovers die, their death is celebrated in heaven as the lover is eternally united with her beloved.

The writings of Baba Farid, Guru Nanak Dev, Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah reveal that each of the writers left his distinct impact on Punjabi Literature. While Baba Farid is the "First

Sufi Poet of Punjab” and gave Punjabi language its dignified place, Guru Nanak Dev is the “First Guru of Sikh *Dharma*” who made use of the language of the people and “made it an instrument of the subtlest thought and the deepest emotion.” (Maini, 3) Bulleh Shah is known as the “Servant of God”, “knower of hidden secrets”. His *kafis* are regarded as the “pinnacle of Sufi Literature.” (Puri, 3) Waris Shah’s *Heer* is much admired for its blend of both the sensuous and the philosophical aspects. It stands supreme as a fusion of love, beauty, mysticism and martyrdom. Through the works of the four poets one also learns the way poetry becomes a medium to share the mystic vision. Baba Farid as a saint revealed the ways for spiritual realisation. Guru Nana Dev as a spiritual leader and a social reformer sang of the greatness of the Lord. Bulleh Shah who spent his life as a *faqir* and a disciple shared his experiences of spiritual learning and trials of the spiritual path. Waris Shah as a *Qissakar* used the legend of Heer Ranjha to depict the relationship of the soul, the master and the Almighty and the way to oneness with the Lord. As for the imagery and symbols Sunita Puri in her book titled *Advent of Sikh Religion*, highlight that the poets of Punjab had a distinctive character. They were so accustomed to the nature, surroundings and the climate of the Punjab, that through their images works exhibit the rural beauty of Punjab in its full exuberance.

When studied together in chronology, the works of the four writers mark the golden period of Punjabi Literature. The variety of verses, *kafis*, folk writings like the *Barahmaha*, *Vars*, couplets, and *Qissa* produced in the period are the templates for the future writers to follow. Though the four poets stand distinct in their writings and style, they had the vision of the soul and the connection of the soul with the Supreme Power. Through the medium of their writings the four poets have shared their mystic vision which acts as an inspiration for later mystics and poets.



**Chapter III:**  
**The Poetry of Baba Farid and Guru Nanak Dev:**  
**A Study of Spiritual Consciousness**

“All the enlightened have left one message; ... it is only those in the midst of their journey who hold diverse opinions.”

— Dadu Sahab

Baba Farid, the first Sufi saint to write in Punjabi language, expressed his divine experiences in the form of poetry. His verses have been written in the form of four hymns- two in the *Raag Asa* under the heading *Asa Sheikh Farid Jiu ki Bani* (Sheikh Farid's utterances in the measure of *Raag Asa*) and two in the *Raag Suhi* under the heading *Raag Suhi Bani Sheikh Farid Ji Ki* (Sheikh Farid's utterances in the measure of *Raag Suhi*) and around one hundred and twelve *shalokas* (couplets) of Baba Farid under the title of *Shaloka Sheikh Farid ke* (Shalokas of Sheikh Farid) in the *Raag Jaijavanti* of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Baba Farid is said to have written his compositions in the Persian and Arabic scripts. He used the dialects of Punjabi language so that his verses could reach the masses. They are said to be the foremost in Punjabi Sufi poetry. The authorship of Baba Farid's verses has been challenged by a number of historians like M. A. Macauliffe, K. A. Nizami and others, who in their analysis have attributed the authorship of his verses to his successors like Sheikh Ibrahim. But the authors of the *Sacred Writings of the Sikhs* ascribe the authorship to Baba Farid. (K. Singh, 319) The verses project the Sufi line of thought which was prevalent in the medieval ages in Punjab. The orthodox and strict code of conduct which was propagated at the time for a Sufi has been clearly reflected in Farid's verses.

Baba Farid's orthodox beliefs and practices of the Sufi spiritual path made him one of the forerunners of the Chisti order of Sufis in India. His verses depict him as a strict practitioner of the Sufi path. He makes his readers realize the importance of following a strict code of life. The image of Baba Farid that emerges from the Farid- *bani* is that of an ardent follower of Islam. He exhorts his followers to follow the strict rules of Islam. As expressed in his verses,

one who is a Muslim, should observe the ritual prayers (*namaaz*) five times a day, should perform the duties (*wazu*) and should also go to the mosque regularly. Being a strict master he even mentions that the head which does not bend in the Holy Feet of the Lord should be cut off and used as firewood for cooking. He writes:

*fareedaa bay nivaajaa kuti-aa ayh na bhalee reet.*  
*kabhee chal na aa-i-aa panjay vakhat maseet. ||70||*  
*uth fareedaa ujoo saaj subah nivaaj gujaar.*  
*jo sir saaN-ee naa nivai so sir kap utaar. ||71||*  
*jo sir saa-ee naa nivai so sir keejai kaaN-ay.*  
*kunnay hayth jalaa-ee-ai baalan sandai thaa-ay. ||72||*  
 O prayerless cur, this isn't good for you, no, nay.  
 Pray, why do you visit not the mosque but five times a day? ||70||  
 Arise, o Farid, perform thy ablution and say thy prayers to thy God:  
 And whosoever bows not to Him, chop off his head. ||71||  
 Pray, what is one to do to the head that bows not to God?  
 Yea, use it as firewood beneath the cooking pot. ||72|| (SGGS, 1312)

Contrary to this Sant Singh Sekhon and Kartar Singh Duggal in their book on *The History of Punjabi Literature* have stated, "A feature of Sheikh Farid's compositions available in the *Guru Granth* is that they do not seem to be the work of a religious missionary of Islam who is known to have enjoyed great esteem in high circles both religious and temporal and to have converted a large number of people to Islam. These compositions have very little of the spirit of Islamic *Shara*, use very little of Islamic religious lore and do not show any marked sectarian trends." (Sekhon, 20) In his verses in the *Holy Granth* we see that Baba Farid's mystical ideas were formed on the basis of Islamic ideologies but his mystic appeal lies in the fact that he highlighted that spiritual progress can happen when one has love in his heart for the Lord. He also stresses on the strict adherence to the *Sharia't*, the legal prescriptions of Islam. Schimmel as an analyst of Sufi poetry has mentioned that the early Sufis believed in following the Muslim laws in the true sense because it was "the soil out on which their piety grew." (Schimmel, 106)

Farid also mentions the importance of the guidance of a Guru or *pir* or a spiritual guide on the mystical path. Without the teachings and guidance of a Guru the life is wasted in wanderings. As he states, “the Path that the Guru shows, that the disciple must follow.” (SGGS, 483)

In his verses Farid mentions that a person should follow the path of righteousness and should be able to gain God’s Grace before it is too late for him. He also states that if death falls upon a person it will be too late for him to gain God’s acceptance. Pashaura Singh stated, “This theme of urgency in the face of death and the fear of judgement comes from his deep Islamic background.” (P. Singh, 48) Farid frequently mentions the “angel of death” in his verses and warns mankind to not to get so involved in the worldly pursuits that they forget about their goal. Through a powerful symbol, in the *Shalokas* of *Raag Jaijaivanti*, he has described the “angel of death” as the groom who comes to take away his bride (the soul). He has also described the struggles that the soul undergoes when death comes to take it away from this human body. The cracking of the bones and the soul crossing the bridge of hell (*pul sirat*) which is, finer than hair and sharper than a sword have been described in detail. These images bring out the hardships that the soul undergoes after it leaves the body. The bridge of Hell (*pul sirat*) is an important stage in Islamic faith. Kenneth Cragg and Marston Speight write,

The Bridge is a reality (one of the final testings of mankind before entering paradise). It is placed directly over hell, and people pass upon it. Paradise is beyond it. We ask God for safety from the perils of crossing the Bridge. (Cragg, 122)

This idea depicted by Baba Farid in his hymns, is similar to the image depicted in Dante Alighieri’s epic poem *The Divine Comedy* of the early fourteenth century. The different circles of ‘Inferno’ reflect that the souls of the ignorant humans get no direction and are trapped in sin.

*jit dihaarhai Dhan varee saahay la-ay likhaa-ay.  
malak je kannee suneedaa muhu daykhaalay aa-ay.*

*jind nimaanee kadhee-ai hadaa koo karhkaa-ay.  
 saahay likhay na chalnee jindoo kooN samjhaa-ay.  
 jind vahutee maran var lai jaasee parnaa-ay.  
 aapan hathee jol kai kai gal lagai Dhaa-ay.  
 vaalahu nikee puraslaat kannee na sunee aa-ay.  
 fareedaa kirhee pavaNdee-ee kharhaa na aap muhaa-ay. ||1||*

The Day the Bride is to be Wedded is pre-determined.

And, lo, on that day, the Angel of Death, of whom thou had only heard, confronts thee.

And he forces the helpless life out, breaking thy bones:

So, instruct thy life that one can challenge not the Writ of God.

The life is the Bride, Death the Groom, who marrying her, will carry her off.

The body, after bidding farewell to life, whom will she embrace now?

Finer than hair is the Bridge of Hell; have you not heard of it?

Farid: The Call (from the Yond) calls everyone, so, do not get thyself Robbed unawares! ||1|| (SGGS, 1309)

In Dante's "Inferno" we read:

Not foliage green, but of a dusky colour,  
 Not branches smooth, but gnarled and intertangled  
 Not apple-tress were there, but thorns with poison. (Alighieri, 130)

The idea of leading a contemplative life has also been highlighted in the *Farid-bani*. Baba Farid suggests to his followers that it is necessary for them to be aware of the fact that death is near, and in their awareness they should be able to renounce all the pomp and show of this materialistic life. The theme of death thus becomes even more pronounced as he wants to make his followers realize the transitory nature of human life and the gradual loss of physical beauty. He further states that sensual pleasures are poisonous even though they might be able to lure us every now and then. In his verses he emphasises a detachment for this worldly life of carnal desires.

Prays Farid: "O my loved mates, cling to your Lord,  
 For, this body will be reduced to the dust, and its home will be a humble grave." ||1||

I would meet with my Lord today, if I could hold the wandering geese of my mind's Desires. ||1-Pause||

If I knew I would die and come not again into the world,

I would love not the False world to lose the Merit of this life: ||2|| (SGGS, 483)

The urgency of realization is revealed to the readers when Farid suggests that with old-age, death can take us into her clutches. The image of the “humble grave” calling out to the soul, tells us about the inevitability of death and that it will fall upon us one day. He regrets the ignorance that enveloped his mind during youth and in old age he has realized that the path of spiritual upliftment cannot be traced again.

I writhe in Pain, in utter remorse:  
Like mad, I seek out my God.  
My Lord has become cross with me:  
But the Evil is within me; my God is not to blame. ||1||  
I knew not the Glory of my Lord,  
And now when my youth has become a waste, I Grieve. ||1- Pause|| (SGGS, 483)

He has even employed the symbol of ‘Satan’ (*shaytan*) in his verses to show how humans are led astray on the spiritual path by the evil temptations.

*Fareedaa kookaydi-aa chaaNgaydi-aa matee daydi-aa nit.*  
*jo saitaan vanjaa-i-aa say kit fayreh chit. ||15||*  
O Farid, you were goaded so often to go the God’s way:  
But, still you chose the Devil: can you now turn away from him? O, nay. ||15||  
(SGGS, 1310)

Love plays a major role in the Sufi poetry of Punjab. Schimmel has stated that it is one of the salient features of Indo-muslim poetry. Sufi Poetry reflects many shades of love. There is passion for the beloved, a yearning to be near Him and most importantly the pain of being separated from the beloved. This yearning and the pain of separation has been “regarded as the highest spiritual attainment in the verses of Shaikh Farid”. (P. Singh, 50) He has prominently

made use of the image of *Koel* and a separated wife to show the phases of agony and pain that the soul undergoes on being separated from the beloved.

O black *Koel*, why have you turned black?"  
 (And She says) "I have burnt black to the Separation from my Spouse!"  
 Pray, how can one, without God, be at Peace?  
 (But), when the Lord is Merciful, He unites one with Himself. ||2|| (SGGS, 755)

Baba Farid has even given a 'kingly' status to this state of separation of the soul from its source as it is in this phase that the spiritual realization occurs and the pleasure of re-union awaits the soul after this has passed.

Even though Baba Farid belonged to the sect of orthodox Sufis, love occupies a prominent place in his verses. The love he depicts is love for the Divine, full of honesty and eagerness to gain His vision. He compares the true devotee to a 'swan' and 'lotus' and that 'a fragrance of musk' surrounds those who are truly united to the Lord. The image of a newly wedded bride deserted by her beloved has been used in a number of *shalokas*. The question "the deserted ones how pass their nights, awake?" (SGGS, 483) is enough to tell us about the agony of separation the soul experiences or undergoes. He states that "the true devotees that are soaked in God's love (*ishq khuda'i*) experience the vision (*didar*) of their cherished Beloved" (P. Singh, 53):

*dilahu muhabat jinH say-ee sachi-aa.*  
*jinH man hor mukh hor se kaaNdhay kachi-aa. ||1||*  
*ratay isak khudaa-ay rang deedaar kay.*  
*visri-aa jinH naam tay bhu-ay bhaar thee-ay. ||1|| rahaa-o.*  
 They who love their Lord with their whole heart, alone are True,  
 But, they who say one thing and do another, they are reckoned as False. ||1||  
 They who are imbued with the Love of Allah are inebriated with His Vision.  
 But they who have forsaken the Lord's Name are a burden to the earth. ||1-  
 Pause|| (SGGS, 483)

In his description of a 'True Devotee' (*Bhagat*) he states;

If one be Innocent even when Wise,  
And be Powerless even when Blest with power,  
And share even when there is least to share,  
One is a True Devotee of God. But rare is such a one, how rare! ||128|| (SGGS, 1311)

Therefore the one with the above mentioned attributes and also humility, forgiveness, honesty and sweetness can be a true devotee of God.

Baba Farid stresses on the idea of the cultivation of moral and ethical values as a necessary requisite to enter the mystic path of love for the Lord. He propounds that the devotees of the Lord should be, "*bole-ai sach Dharam jhooth na bole-ai.*" "Righteous and True in speech and speak no Falsehood." (SGGS, 483) He further emphasises that one should be content with what one has gained in his life through honest means and should not depend on alms from others. Balwant Singh Anand explains this stating that,

The practice of social virtues, which form an integral part of *Sharia*'t, are given a prominent treatment in Farid's verses. In his own inimitable way, Farid sings of kindness, humility, forbearance, patience and other virtues which make life sweeter and richer. Virtues not only make one acceptable in society but according to Quran, God befriends those who perform noble deeds. (Anand, 61)

Baba Farid is said to have led a life of poverty (*faqr*) and resignation (*tawakkul*). It is believed that even the gifts that were showered on him by his devotees were not accepted or if accepted were distributed amongst those who deserved them. He even preached the idea that what one has should also be shared with others. He laid stress on the virtues of humility, forgiveness and sweetness of tongue which help form a positive and compassionate character. It is to be understood that Baba Farid teaches that all the creatures of God are equal and are

worthy of the same respect and dignity. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami states, “He wanted his disciples to accept the life of penury and penitence with pleasure and devote themselves to Him and Him alone. He was keenly conscious of the fact that the highest spiritual aspirations of man are apt to be stifled by the weight of his material possessions and that riches often arrest the growth and expansion of the spirit.” (Nizami, 90)

*paas damaamay chhat sir bhayree sado rad.  
jaa-ay sutay jeeraan meh thee-ay ateemaa gad. //45//  
fareedaa kothay mandap maarhee-aa usarayday bhee ga-ay.  
koorhaa sa-udaa kar ga-ay goree aa-ay pa-ay. //46//*  
They, to whom are the drums beat, and over whose head waves the caopies, and  
whose praises the bards sing, and in whose honour the pipes shriek,  
In the end they too find rest in the burning ground, or are buried in the graves  
like the poor and the meek! //45//  
O Farid, they who built houses and mansions also left the world:  
Yea, they but made false deals, as only grave was their end! //46// (SGGS,  
1311)

Patience during the spiritual journey has been regarded as the essential characteristic of the mystic. It is with patience that one gathers strength to perform the strict practices. Sheikh Farid has compared this quality of patience with the power of an arrow which never misses its target. He states:

*sabar manjh kamaan ay sabar kaa neehno.  
sabar sandaa baan khaalak khataa na karee. //115//  
sabar andar saabree tan ayvai jaalayniH.  
hon najeek khudaa-ay dai bhayt na kisai dayn. //116//  
sabar ayhu su-aa-o jay tooN bandaa dirh karahi.  
vaDh theeveh daree-aa-o tut na theeveh vaahrhaa. //117//*  
Make Patience your Arrow; and Patience your Bow,  
And then Aim at thy Life-object: and lo, you Win by God’s Grace. //115//  
Men of Patience burn off their sense of selfhood.  
And so they are near God, (but) share they this Mystery with another. //116//  
O man, if you are firmly rooted in Patience, yea, if this be your object in life,  
Then you grow like a mighty river and break not off to be mere off-shoot.  
//117// (SGGS, 1314-15)



Balwant Singh Anand opines, “That he is a poet of great sensitivity, no one can deny but he is more given to teaching and preaching than to the sheer joy of singing a song.” (Anand, 89) However a reader of Baba Farid’s hymns finds an integral rhythm and music brought out by the words used by him. These hymns when sung in the form of *shabads* in Sikh congregations give delight to the listeners. Even though the hymns are serious in tone but Baba Farid’s ideas are convincing. The verses written in Multani Punjabi, were popular amongst the masses during that period and the use of Persian words give an essence of the Persian influence on Farid. Some of these Persian words can be found in the verses of Guru Nanak and his successors too.

Baba Farid’s poetic excellence and artistry can be truly assessed only through an analysis of the symbols, images and play of language which make his verses unique and complex. It is likely that a researcher of Punjabi poetry may find his poetry in the original language even more interesting and intriguing than the English translations of these verses. But the analysis of the English versions of Baba Farid’s verses present in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* translated by Dr. Gopal Singh, show that the translator has put in the best efforts to keep the beauty of the verses and hymns of the Guru Sahabs and *Bhaktas* intact. In his *shalokas* Farid has prominently highlighted the benefits of remembering only and only God. He says that all doubts vanish when one has true love for God in his heart. He compares the faith of a person to a tree, like a tree cannot be swayed the same way a devotee (*darvesh*) never doubts his Lord.

Serve thy God, O Farid, casting off the Doubt from thee,  
For, a *Darvesh* is he, who has patience of a tree. ||60|| (SGGS, 1312)

Furthermore, he gives the example of ‘straw’ and says that one should be humble like grass if one is eager to be united with the Lord.

Be, O Farid, like straw on the God’s way.  
If you seek to find thy All- pervading Lord.

First, it is cut and then crushed under the feet:  
And, then alone it enters the God's Door, fresh and neat! ||16|| (SGGS, 1311)

He warns his devotees and says that what we search outside is present in us. As Gurbachan Singh Talib states, "There is then the expression of true religion, as that God dwells in the heart of the seeker and not in solitary and waste places." (Talib, n.p.)

He also mocks the saints who pretend to be full of godliness but in reality practice corrupt means. He writes,

O Farid, on thy shoulder is the prayer-mat, on thy body a Sufi's garb, in thy mouth honey, and daggers in thy heart.  
Yea, you see light from without, but in thy heart is utter dark! (SGGS, 720)

The images of 'crow', 'crane' and 'hawks' are used to show death, ignorance and mishaps respectively in his verses. He has also personified 'death', 'sleep', 'grave' and 'old-age' to give them living attributes and make these the themes in his verses.

The one thing to be prominently noted in Baba Farid's verses is the use of the self address "Farid" or "O Farid" in the beginning of his couplets or quatrains. This self address is not to give prominence to himself but he takes "Farid" as a symbol for mankind or everyman. Using his own experiences he reveals the various aspects of life and experiences on the spiritual path.

The following table of symbols gives the analysis of the theme and the symbols used accordingly.

Table 1

## Theme and meaning of the symbols used in Baba Farid's verses

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Symbols</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Strictly following the tenets of Islam	Namaz, Mosque, <i>Sharia</i> 't, <i>wazu</i>  Firewood  Poverty	Duties of a true Muslim  For the one who doesn't pray is regarded as senseless like the firewood and should be sacrificed  One should not care about worldly possessions to move forward on the spiritual path
Death	Groom  Bride  Bridge of Hell " <i>Pul Sirat</i> "  Body shall turn to dust, its home to be the graveyard  Satan  Humble grave  Sleep	Angel of death  Soul  Struggles that an ignorant soul goes through  To be aware that one will not live forever, hence the time one has he should utilize in the remembrance of God  Temptations on the spiritual path  The inevitable end  Slumber or ignorance
Love	Cries of <i>Koel</i> and a separated bride	Yearning of the soul
True devotee	Strength of arrow/ tree  Straw  Swan/ lotus/ fragrance of musk	A patient devotee is never able to miss his target on the spiritual path  Humility  Those who have unwavering faith in God
Life	Nature- seasons  Dropping leaves	Life  Aging
	Farid	Everyman or mankind

After Baba Farid, Guru Nanak Dev Ji brought glory to Punjabi Poetry with his beautiful hymns. Guru Nanak Dev Ji wrote at a time when the *Bhakti* Movement and Sufism were at the peak. He combined the best of the two ideologies in his teachings. At a time when the persecution of the Muslim leaders was creating much havoc in the lives of the citizens of Punjab, the rituals of the Hindu saints made it even harder for the people to find solace in religion. Khushwant Singh points out:

It was in the meeting of the two streams of Bhakti and Sufism that Nanak made his pilgrimage. He (Guru Nanak) criticized exclusiveness and intolerance and meaningless ritual of both Hinduism and Islam; he lauded what they had in common; belief in the One indefinable God, the casteless equality of mankind; the necessity of taking a guide (Guru of the Hindus, peer of the Muslims); futility of ascetic isolation and penance; the possibility of combining religious life with domestic and social obligations; and the mystic realization of God through singing hymns of praise in the still, quiet hours of early dawn. (K. Singh, 68)

In his verses Guru Nanak Dev Ji made several references to the troubled state of affairs in Punjab. He referred to this period as the 'Dark Ages' or *Kali*-age and 'Kaliyuga'. With the Mughal invasion and the rule of Lodhi Dynasty before it, the condition of the people was miserable. There were murders, mass slaughtering as the kings like 'butchers' were interfering in the peaceful lives of the people.

The Kali-age is (like) the knife; the kings are (like) butchers.  
And righteousness has taken wings;  
All around, it is the dark night of Falsehood;  
And Truth? O, where is the moon of truth? (SGGS, 137)

The verses reflect that only falsehood prevailed and that people had given up the life of righteousness and honesty. He compares the kings to 'butchers', 'dogs', 'tyrant' and writes about their lust for power and wealth. The verses even highlight that only imposters can survive in these corrupt times as the one who is genuine is not trusted.

In the Kali age, men have become greedy, and, dog-like, they usurp another's due.

They utter what is False and care not for Righteousness. (SGGS, 1187)

One calls the false one true but the Essence of Truth one knows not.

Wonderful is this age: wherein the Blind one is the seer! (SGGS, 220)

In his description of the ages Guru Nanak Dev Ji writes about the evolution of the ages from *Sat Yuga* to *Kalyuga*. He also witnessed the downfall of the Lodhi dynasty and Babur's ascension to the throne in 1526. In his *Babur-vani* he gives a detailed description of the troubled times that he witnessed during Babur's reign.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji showed his contempt for rituals, idol worship and also the worship of one's ancestors. According to him rituals are the "chains of the mind" "*karam dharma bhandhankari*". If one uses the time one spends in conducting rituals and following ceremonies in the contemplation of the Name of God then it can bring him closer to the Almighty. When one knows the true nature of the Lord he gets the awareness that all rites and rituals are futile. Therefore, the rituals that make us forget our True Lord are "cursed". He was also against bathing in the holy waters or taking pilgrimages because he taught people that the true pilgrimage lies within oneself. By reflecting on the 'nectar' name of the Lord one can experience bliss within oneself.

The Muslims praise their law and they read and dwell upon it.

But the lord's Bondman is he who Binds himself to see His sight.

The Hindus praise the Lord whose Presence and Form are Infinite.

(But to win Him over) they bathe in the "Holy Waters", and make flower-offerings to the idols and burn perfumed incense before them!....

In water as on land, in the three worlds as on the spheres, is life, form upon form.

And whatever is their wish that too Thou Fulfillest, for who else is their support but Thou, O God?

Says Nanak: "Thy Devotees' Hunger is only to Praise Thee, O Lord, and their Sustenance is Thy True Name..." (SGGS, 459)

Guru Nanak Dev Ji promoted the idea of a casteless society. He said that what use is the ‘caste’ of a person when in the after-life, one is tested only on the basis of his virtuous living. The caste of a person doesn’t have much meaning as the soul reflects its true colours in front of the Lord. Therefore, he compares the ‘caste’ to dust and mentions that it is futile to run after one’s worldly possessions and rituals.

If the seeker cries out and begs at the Lord’s Door, the Lord Hears him,  
And whether He blesses him or Curses him, he must revel in His Glory.  
See thou of each the Light within and ask not his caste:  
For, Hereafter, the caste is of no avail. (SGGS, 339)

And also,

Hereafter, caste and power are of no account, for a new man is born into the world of God. (SGGS, 462)

KS Duggal in his book of *The Sikh Gurus: Their Lives and Teachings* has enumerated the nine forms of *bhakti* which were also taught by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, in his hymns. He states:

There are nine forms of *bhakti* accepted in the spiritual order. These are 1. Listening (*srawan*), 2. Music (*kirtan*), 3. Remembrance (*simuran*), 4. Following in the footsteps of the master (*padsevan*), 5. Service (*archan*), 6. Singing praises (*vandana*), 7. Obedience (*dasbhav*), 8. Friendship (*mitrata*) and 9. Self-surrender (*atma nivedan*). Guru Nanak subscribed to all these but the best form of *bhakti* according to him is *prema bhakti*, loving devotion to God. (Duggal, 37)

These nine ways form the crux of the message conveyed by Guru Nanak Dev ji. Guru Sahab was one of the pioneers of *Bhakti* movement in Punjab. Through his experiences, teachings and hymns the essential postulates of *Bhakti* were able to reach the masses. In his *Japji Sahib* Guru Nanak Dev Ji in the *pauris* (stanzas) eight to eleven tells of the importance of listening to the Name. He gives the attributes of “deathlessness”, “contentment”, “knowledge”, “even the Blind

will see the path (sublime)” (SGGS, 3) to the ones who listen to the “the Word of the Lord” and they thus become “forever joyed” and their “pain and sin are destroyed”. The mind of the devotee is illumined on listening to the “word” of the Lord.

Music and the *sumiran* of the Holy Name forms the “unstruck melody” or *anahad naad* in the mind of the practitioner. The repetition of the Holy Name or the Word of the Lord, is what comprises *sumiran*. The constant *sumiran* of the Name takes the mind to its source. The mind gets solace and peace with the resonance of the sound of the Holy Name. As Guru Sahab states, “He, the Lord is immersed in the Unstruck Melody of the Word.” (SGGS, 341) And the ‘Divine Music’ “is precious like the Jewel... And through it is produced the Essence of Thy Nectar.” (SGGS, 341) Hence the ecstasy of union which one feels is achieved through the remembrance of the name and the experiences one gets with the repetition of the sound of the Name. In one of his verses Rumi has explained the ‘music’ and feeling of ecstasy experienced by the one who is coloured in the love of God:

In the house of Lovers,  
The music never stops.  
The walls are made of songs  
And the floor dances. (Rumi, Web)

As stated in Guru Sahab’s hymns, God’s Holy Name is the panacea and one reaches the highest order of living by being completely engrossed in His Name. The Name is therefore the only means to get attuned to the Holy Lord. The Name is the truth and in it lie all the treasures of the world. Therefore one must dwell only on the Holy Name as all else is but false and transient. He even warns that those souls who do not follow the Name are cursed and are unable to leave this cycle of birth and death as they will always be trapped in worldly attachments. The Holy Name is therefore a means to merge in the One, because the person who dwells by the Name of the Lord is only dear to Him. As to how can one gain the Holy Name, Guru Nanak enlightens us by saying that within our body lies the “nectar” Name of the Lord. For the one

who contemplates can only experience the power of the Name. The master as a guide enlightens his disciple as to the ways and means by which his disciple can gain the glory of the Holy Name. The True Name is the food of the disciple which frees his mind from all doubts. In *Raag Ramkali* Guru Nanak has stated:

It is through the Perfect Guru that one is Blest with the Name,  
And to merge in Truth is the True Way of Yoga.  
The Yogis are split into Twelve (sects), the Sanyasins into ten,  
But he, who Dies to the Self, being Awake to the Word, alone is Emancipation.  
Without the Word, all are lured away by the Other: reflect thou on this.  
Says Nanak, "They alone are Blessed and Know who Enshrined the Truth in  
their mind." (SGGS, 898)

Therefore God's Name is the source of honour, purification and also the path to gain virtues and power. As Guru Nanak Dev Ji states in the *Raag Parbhathi* that with God's name alone one can swim across this "ocean of existence" and be transported to a life of honour and glory. That soul is regarded the purest in which abides the Name of the Lord. He says that with the Name of the Lord, man is bestowed with 'truth', 'contentment' and 'divine wisdom'. He even states that the Holy Name is a source of gaining salvation. Therefore without the Name one cannot gain salvation. Thus when one accepts that God exists in everything then only the Knowledge of the Lord dawns upon him. Hence accepting that the sky and the earth will pass away and only He will prevail, is the moment of complete surrender to the Lord.

They (who hear the Word, Believe) are the creation's cream,  
They are the ones Approved, Supreme:  
Are honoured in the Court (of God) such beings,  
Look beauteous in the councils of kings.  
They fix their minds in the One Master only,  
They say and do what is thoughtful, holy. (SGGS, 4)

Shankar Gopal Tulpule describes this process of repetition of the Holy Name as:



The Self, or the *Atman*, is the real moving force within; but the ego comes in the way of the Self as it is under the illusion that it is itself, and not the *Atman*, that rules. Meditation on *Nam* or the Guru's Word reveals the Self more and more to one's ego, which gradually turns towards God and finally identifies itself with the Divine. This Divine is the God described in the *Mulmantra* of Guru Nanak. By enshrining the Name in one's heart one gradually acquires, though to a limited extent, the attributes of the God described in the *Mulmantra*, and in this way man is transformed into the image of God. (Tulpule, 211)

It can be deciphered from the verses of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, that the goal of the human soul is to gain union with the Supreme Lord. The soul with the anchor of the Guru learns of the ways and means by which one can get closer to its Lord. Though ego, relationships and desires may be the biggest challenges to overcome but one is able to give up everything when he has the Grace of the Lord on him

Guru Sahab gave prominence to the idea of having a spiritual mentor for guidance on the spiritual path. The Guru helps his disciple to learn about the different hardships, struggles and also the way to ascend on the spiritual path. The Guru is the torch "enlightener" of the spiritual path. He is the one who gives the knowledge of the Supreme Lord, because he alone knows the way to meet and be in communion with the Lord. Guru Sahab compares the Guru to a 'ladder' as he helps the soul reach God. He is the 'river of clean water' as he frees the mind of the disciple from the 'dirt' of evil intellect. Hence "Without the Guru, Love springs not; nor the Dirt of Ego goes." (SGGS, 57) As Sunita Puri states, "For Sikhs, Guru is the holy teacher, the prophet under direct commission from God to set mankind on the path of righteousness." (Puri, 42) The Guru in Guru Nanak Dev Ji's verses has been symbolized as 'ladder' or 'boat' or the 'raft'. The Guru has also been symbolized as the 'farmer' and all the necessary virtues form the equipment needed for farming and our body being the 'farm' where he 'seeds' the Name of the Lord. He has also used the symbol of 'cattle and shepherd' where the Guru as a shepherd controls the cattle and keeps them from losing the path. Also the symbols of water and fish, fish and fisherman, oil and lamp, drop and ocean are some of the prominent images used to describe

Guru and disciple relationship. He also explained this relationship by taking the image of ‘ideal writing’. He explains it as:

Burn thy avarice, and pounding it, prepare the ink,  
And, make thy intelligence pure like paper to write on.  
With the pen of Love let thy mind, the writer, write on it as the Guru instructs:  
Write thou of His Praise, of the Lord’s Name and of the Wisdom that He is  
Infinite. (SGGS, 19)

Guru Raam Das Ji, the fourth Sikh Guru, even stated that the divine revelations made by the Guru in his *bani* or *shabad* are equivalent to the Guru.

*Bani Guru Guru Hai Bani vich Bani Amrit sare*  
The Word is the (Embodiment of the) Guru; the Guru is in the Word: yea, in the  
Word are contained all the elixirs. (SGGS, 938)

Hence the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* which contains the hymns of the ten Sikh Gurus and also the *Bhaktas* enlightens one and all with the message of the Lord. Guru Nanak Dev Ji as the first Sikh Guru called himself a servant of God, a messenger of God who came to spread the message of love and service to the Lord to lead people on the spiritual path.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji encourages one to sing praises of the Lord and the Guru. By doing so he states that one accepts the greatness of his Lord and his master. As the Supreme Lord is the Highest of all and the creator of this universe so by singing of His praises one merges in his True Lord. As Narain Singh explains in his description of the twenty third *pauri* of *Japji Sahib*, “...dwelling on His praises leads to merging in Him, as streams and rivers merge in the Sea. It is like becoming unto Him and therefore rich and powerful, as He Himself is.” (Singh, 167-168)

Service to the Guru is one of the most important postulates of the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev ji. He calls the service to the Guru as the “True and Pure deed” and by serving one’s Guru a person is actually serving his Lord.

The *Mool Mantra* which forms the opening *shaloka* of the *Japji Sahib* and also of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* enumerates the attributes of the Lord. Pritam Singh in his essay “Philosophy of Mul Mantra” states that the *mantra* contains fourteen symbols which are reflective of the one Supreme Reality. It is through these symbols that Guru Nanak Dev ji has expressed His spiritual experience and these symbols in turn are influenced by the tradition and the Vedic philosophy that there is just one Supreme Lord. In the second half of the *Mool Mantra* Guru Sahab suggests that one must meditate on the glories of the Lord for in Him lies the Truth of this existence.

Guru Nanak brings man into relationship with his benevolent Providence or the Lord supreme. As the ultimate source of system and order in the universe, God enlightens the human mind and equips it for the discovering of cosmic order. In this respect He is the divine Teacher (Guru), who guides the destiny of man, shows him the path of life, and gives him freedom of choice and action in the framework of temporal existence. (N. Singh, 149)

The symbols of the ‘lotus feet’, ‘pearls of wisdom’, ‘nectar name’, ‘eternal truth’, ‘ocean of existence’, the one who shapes the vessels in which he pours the milk of wisdom are some of the attributes with which he has described the Lord. He even adds that the Lord is the creator, destroyer and the recreator of this universe. In him are contained *Brahma*, *Shiva* and *Vishnu*. He is all in all, his light is present in all. Nature is a reflection of him.

He the Lord of Himself created Himself and Assumed He Himself the Name.  
And then He Created Nature, and Abiding within it, He Revelled in His Wonder. (SGGS, 456)

Guru Nanak in his teachings suggests a number of qualities to his followers which are necessary for a ‘*gurmukh*’ in his lifestyle. He states that a lover of Lord should have a sweet speech. Love for God can never grow in a heart which utters bitter words. He even suggests that the ones who talk much, their talking is in vain as they waste most of their time in meaningless

chatter. He encourages people to be charitable, compassionate and to have a clean-conduct. He calls the body and mind “a clean vessel” for it is in the clean mind that the Lord’s Truth can be contained. For “clean heart” he states that the one who utters the Name of the Lord with a clean heart, in him resides the Lord. Through his verses Guru Sahab has mentioned the positive side of leading a virtuous life. Being happy, honest, content, faithful, courageous, respectful, detached from worldly ties and grateful for the Lord’s gifts, are some of the virtues he has mentioned in his verses. The real meaning of these virtues is gained only when one practises these virtues in real life. The symbols of ‘farm’, ‘farming’, ‘furrowing’ are used to explain how a soul full of good deeds can help a person lead a virtuous life.

Let thy Mind be the farmer, Good Deeds the farming and thy body the farm:  
And let Effort (in the way of God) irrigate thy farm.  
Let the Lord’s Name be the seed, and Contentment the furrowing, and let the  
fence be of Humility.  
And if thou dost Deeds of Love, thy Seed will sprout and Fortunate will be thy  
Home. (SGGS, 577)

Guru Sahab in his verses has also referred to ‘*Maya*’ and the devil who lure a devotee from his spiritual path. The sins one commits, the life of avarice, dishonesty, covetousness, lust, and also anger lead to a man’s downfall and he strays from his spiritual path or the path which takes him closer to his Lord. *Maya* like the ‘net’ covers the mind of all and sundry, only the God-wards (*Gurmukh*) are able to resist the temptations of *Maya*. Therefore all preaching and God’s teachings are wasted on those who are engrossed in *Maya*. He even suggests to his devotees that there is no need to leave behind one’s responsibilities of life. The union with the Lord can happen while one leads a life of a householder. By going in the forest and renouncing the world one cannot gain union with Lord but by fulfilling one’s family duties and also being attuned with the Name of the Lord, only can one gain union with Him.

When one Cherishes the (Lord’s) truth, one’s mind is Illumined:  
And, then, one remains detached in the midst of attachments.  
Such is the Glory of the True Guru,

That, in the midst of the household, one is Emancipated. (SGGS, 636)

And again a ‘true householder’ is,

He alone is a householder who disciplines his sense-desires.  
And begs from God Contemplation, Austerity and Self-control.  
And gives in charity all he can through his body.  
Yea, such a householder is Pure, like Ganga’s water. (SGGS, 909)

Death is therefore feared by those who waste their lives in mundane activities and waste the time of their lives which could have been utilized in meditating on the Name of the Lord.

Therefore Guru Sahab suggests:

The world is trapped in Infatuation and Desire and Hope:  
And, it is through the Guru’s Word that one becomes detached.  
They, within whom rings the Lord’s Name, flower like lotus,  
And over their heads is no more the terror of Death. (SGGS, 409)

Guru Nanak in his teachings had accepted the doctrines of *Karma* and transmigration of the soul. According to him the process of birth and death goes on according to the deeds one reforms in his life. If a person is able to break the wall of his/her ego through the Name of the Lord he is then able to be closer to his Lord. Guru Sahab has written the lines “One reaps what one sows” in many of His verses. Therefore he suggests that the actions we perform in this life are recorded and only on the day of judgement we can give the account of our doings. The day of judgement here refers to the time of death, when the soul is tested upon its doings in the court of the Lord. As he has even stated in the closing *shaloka* of the *Japji Sahib*:

Our deeds, good and bad,  
Are read  
In the Presence of the Lord of Law:  
Our Actions keep us far, or near Him draw;  
They who Dwell on the Name, their Toil is o’er.  
Glorious are their beings, Nanak, they save many more. (SGGS, 12)

Balwant Singh Anand explains that,

Guru Nanak accepted the three ideas of transmigration, *samsara* and *karma* and wove them into his system. Transmigration, he taught, was based on *Karma*, the actions of the present and past lives... A man is free to act, but he will be judged on the basis of his actions.” (Anand, 201)

Fear of the Lord is regarded as the greatest fear in the hearts of the devotee by Guru Nanak. He states that the heart which is not fearful of its Lord cannot truly love the Lord and show respect for Him. In his verses Guru Nanak states that the hearts in which the ‘fear of the Lord’ is nurtured truly Love Him.

Without (the Lord’s) Fear, not one has Crossed (the Sea of Existence),  
(For), with this Fear is Decked the (Lord’s) Love.  
The fire of Fear that is within us burns brighter the more we Fear our Lord,  
We feed this Fire with (the Love of) the Word.  
Without the Lord’s Fear, all that one Casts is false,  
False is the Mould, and false the beating (on the Anvil). (SGGS, 144)

Love for the divine is prominent in the verses of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The love thus exhibited is not erotic but filled with awe. In his verses as mentioned before, Guru Nanak Dev Ji has highlighted that having fear for the Lord in one’s heart makes the love for the Lord grow many fold. He compares the Love for the Lord with that of the love of the fish for water. The more the water, the more the fish revels in the joy of being in the water. Guru Nanak even suggests that it is with complete surrender to the Lord that one experiences union with Him. He has used the image of ‘*Chatrik*’ bird. Like the sings of the glories of the Lord in the same way a disciple should hum the glories of his Lord. Like the way water and milk when mixed are inseparable, in the same way a disciple should merge in the Lord. As the ‘*Chakvi*’ bird keeps itself awake to the sun throughout the year in the fear of losing it the same way the disciple should be scared that he may not lose the love of Lord. Thus Guru Sahab suggests:

They who Adore the Lord and thirst for His True Love,  
 They cry out in Prayer to Him and, being in Love, are at Peace in the Mind.  
 (SGGS, 498)

He suggests to his devotees that the love for Lord should grow while our “youth is fresh and buoyant”. The one who lives in humility and cherishes the loving devotion to God will experience deliverance in the court of the Lord.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji's poetry is regarded as a store-house of symbols and images that he has taken from a number of sources. Most of the symbols are taken from observations of day to day life and from nature. He has also used the symbols of farm, smithy, shepherd and his cattle to make the readers understand the relationship between the Guru and his disciple. In his verses he has described the attributes of a True Devotee by describing the physical appearance of a *yogi* and also a *sanyasi*. Dr. Gopal Singh, the translator of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* writes about the poetry contained in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* that, “The poetry of the *Granth* sings in symbols. But, the metaphor of the *Granth* is homely and direct, such as one would come across in the daily run of one's life.” (SGGS, xix)

The symbol of ‘bride and groom’ has been prominently used in the verses of Guru Sahab. The soul is the ‘bride’ who yearns to be close to its Lord ‘groom’. The soul is sorrowful on being separated from its beloved but when the Divine Knowledge dawns upon it, the hope to be re-united to its Lord is awakened. He depicts the wife who is “bedecked” with her Lord's love and praises her as the blessed wife, as compared to the one who followed the path of falsehood and is the ‘evil bride’. This difference is similar to the difference between a *gurmukh* and *manmukh*. Where the *manmukh* expresses a false prattle of his love for the Lord, a *gurmukh* abides by the Name of the Lord and leads a life of purity and sanctity. Guru Sahab divided men into two broad categories of: the God- oriented (*gurmukh*) and the Self- oriented (*manmukh*). (J.

Singh, 81) The self-oriented are the ones who with fraudulent methods waste their life and the god-oriented as the name suggests lead a life that is attuned to God's instructions. He writes:

Says Nanak: "She who decks herself with the Lord's Love and Fear,  
She Enjoys ever the Bed of her Beauteous Spouse." (SGGS, 348)

Life has been depicted with the symbols of "stage" and "drama" where everyone has come to fulfil their roles. Even the symbol of 'forest' has been used to suggest that one should not go out searching for various attractions in the 'woods' when all his pleasures lie within oneself. Other symbols are 'wild elephant' for the mind, the 'five evils' for the five senses and with ego in one is not able to merge in God, Guru Nanak tells that a person can know of the divine experience only when these three devils can be calmed.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji has explained the life cycle and divided it into the First, second, third and the fourth 'watch of the night'. In each stanza of the two *chaupadas* (four stanza verses) he has explained these four "watch of the night" or the phases of life, in the first *chaupada* he writes that one leads a life of ignorance and wastes it in his/her mundane activities of life. When *Yama* comes one has no choice but to give up the desire to live and die repenting on one's loss. But in the second *chaupada* he explains that even though *yama* would come to take a person and also old age will fall upon him but the one who goes by the "way of good and continence", he is not scared to "swim across (the Sea of Fear)" for he has the love and devotion for his Lord.

In different *ragas* of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Guru Sahab has explained the code of conduct of a *Brahmin*, a *Yogi*, a *Sanyasin* and also what a 'human body' should be like. For the *Brahmin* he states:



He alone is a *Brahmin*, who knows the Brahma, our only God.  
 And practises Austerity and Contemplation and Self- control, and does (the Right) Deeds.  
 And keeps the Religion of Contentment and Culture.  
 And earns Emancipation, breaking the Bonds (of Desire).  
 Yea, such a *Brahmin*, is worthy of being worshipped. (SGGS, 1337)

For a *yogi*:

The Yogi is he who thinks of the Way  
 To slay the Five (Demons) and to enshrine the Truth within.  
 He, in whom abides the Truth,  
 Alone values the True Way of Yoga. (SGGS, 215)

For a *Sanyasin*:

He alone is a *Sanyasin* who Serves the True Guru, Dying to his Self,  
 And asks not for food and raiments, and whatever he receives unasked he accepts,  
 And barks not in vain and treasures compassion and silences his Wrath through the Lord's Name.  
 O Blessed is such a householder, yea, a *Sanyasin*, a *Yogi*, who's Attuned to the Lord's Feet. (SGGS, 967)

The human body has been regarded as the 'temple', the 'palace' and the 'house of God' for it is the place where he has given home to His 'infinite light'.

In his verses from the *Raag Asa* and *Raag Ramkali*, we observe that Guru Sahab prefers *Sahj- Yoga* over *Hatha- Yoga*. For the latter he writes that *Hatha- Yoga* subdues the body. It weakens the body as the practitioner observes such harsh methods of penance that the motive to calm the mind is not fulfilled by practising it. Therefore neither, the Five Senses or the Mind nor *Maya* are silenced through it. Whereas through *Sahj- Yoga* which is the "spontaneous concentration of mind" (SGGS, 351) Guru Sahab suggests that when one gets the taste of the "Nectar- Name of the Immaculate Lord"; it is then that one "bathes in the Essence of Wisdom." (SGGS, 351)

The most powerful symbol in Guru Sahab's verses is the symbol of the 'smithy', 'blacksmith', 'anvil' and of the 'true mint' which is given in the thirty-eighth *Pauri* of the *Japji Sahib*. He writes about the way in which the Grace of the Lord works and upon whom:

Chastity the Smithy, Patience the Smith,  
 Understanding the Anvil, Knowledge the Tools,  
 Fire of Austerity, Bellows of Fear,  
 The Pot of devotion, in it melt thou Nectar.  
 The Word  
 In this True Mint is Coined.  
 They, on whom is His Grace, their way is this.  
 'Tis Grace that filleth the man with Bliss. (SGGS, 11)

Table 2

Symbolical Meaning of the Thirty-Eighth *Pauri* of *Japji Sahib*

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Message</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Smithy	Chastity	With self-control and chasteness one can take his first step on the spiritual path
Smith	Patience	Like a smith who works in the mine and brings out the gold in the same way patience in a seeker helps him go forward on the path
Anvil	Understanding	Like the metal is beaten on the anvil the same way understanding helps the seeker to know about his short comings
Tools	Knowledge	Like the tools help in the formation of the metal, knowledge helps the seeker to know about the essentials of the spiritual path and the way to reach the Lord.
Fire	Austerity	Like the fire heats and burns all the impurities, austerity helps seeker to control his desires
Bellows	Fear	Fear is important on the path as it helps dissolve all doubts and makes the faith in the Lord stronger
Pot	Devotion	The pot in which metal melts and is boiled should be the pot of

		devotion which is able to melt all the negativities and make the seeker flexible to be moulded in the best way
Nectar	The Word	Repetition of the Holy Name
True Mint	Seeker/ Body	The body which follows these virtues can experience the Grace of the Lord

In his verses Guru Nanak Dev Ji has made use of the symbol of ‘woman’ in a number of contexts. The woman being an agent of attachment, man loses his concentration on the spiritual by being captured in the beauty of his wife. He writes:

The world is overpowered by the woman and loves the woman alone,  
And yoked to the sons and the wife, one forsakes the Lord’s Name. (SGGS, 409)

The second symbol of woman is of her being the ‘mother’. He writes word of praises for as she is the one from whom are born the greatest of great men and rulers. But then also she is ‘denounced’ and disrespected in this world. He writes:

*bhandd janmeeai bhandd ninmeeai bhandd mangan veeaaahu //*  
*bhanddahu hovai dhosathee bhanddahu chalai raahu //*  
*bhandd muua bhandd bhaaleeai bhandd hovai ba(n)dhhaan //*  
*so kio mandhaa aakheeai jith janmehi raajaan //*  
*bhanddahu hee bhandd oopajai bhanddai baajh n koe //* (SGGS, 473)  
From woman, man is born; within woman, man is conceived; to woman he is engaged and married.  
Woman becomes his friend; through woman, the future generations come.  
When his woman dies, he seeks another woman; to woman he is bound.  
So why call her bad?  
From her, kings are born.  
From woman, woman is born; without woman, there would be no one at all. O Nanak, only the True Lord is without a woman. (SGGS, 467)

And again he states:

That it is God and God the Creator who is independent of woman because he is unborn. (SGGS, 467)

Surjit Singh Gandhi highlights that, “From this scriptural authority, it is clear that woman was assigned the status, in no way inferior to man. In fact home, society and country are honoured only if woman is held in esteem.” (Gandhi, 1060) For Guru Sahab and the later Sikh Gurus women held a position which was equal to men. They considered women as much helpful in the growth of a man as a man is in the life of a woman.

For a better understanding of the symbols used by Guru Sahab to convey his message the table below gives the distribution of the symbols used.

Table 3

Theme and Meaning of Symbols used in Guru Nanak Dev Ji's verses

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Symbols</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
<i>Gurmukh</i>		Abides by the Name of the Lord
	Farmer	Mind
	Farming	Good Deeds
	Farm	Body
	Irrigate	Efforts
	Seeds	Lord's Name
	Furrowing	Contentment
	Fence	Humility

<i>Manmukh</i>		Self- centred
<i>Kaliyuga</i>	Knife (kali age)  Kings and butchers	The troubles of the times  The mughal emperors who attacked people for property and conversion to Islam
Rituals	Chains of the mind	As they do not help in the spiritual progress but tie a person in useless matters of false religious satisfaction
<i>Sumiran</i>	<i>Anahad Naad</i> , “unstruck melody”, Divine Music	Repetition of the holy name
<i>Guru</i>	Torch, enlightner, ladder, river of clean water,  Farmer	The mentor who guides one the spiritual journey  Who grows the seed of spirituality
<i>Maya</i>	Net	Hides the spiritual truth
Love	Bride, <i>chakvi</i> bird	The soul
Temple, House of the Lord, Palace	Human body	Where the Light of the Lord is stored
Vices	Five Demons or Five Evils	<i>Kaam, Krodh, Lobh, Moh, Ahankar</i>
Distractions	Wild Elephant,  Woman	Mind,  Sways from the Spiritual Path
Transitory	Stage, Drama	Life
Woman	Mother, <i>Bhhand</i>	Birth and strength

The major verses of Guru Sahab have also been analysed in full length to understand his message from a greater analytical view point. These verses include: *Baramaha*, *Dakhani Onkar*, *Japji Sahib* and others. Guru Nanak's *Baramaha* in the *Raag Tukhari* is one of the first of writings in which the theme of love and separation has been transformed to that of spiritual upliftment. Guru Nanak recited the *Baramaha* at Kartarpur, soon before his mergence with the Light Eternal. (Web) The *Baramaha*, can be defined as, “*Barah Maha* or *Barah Masa* (in Hindi), is a form of folk poetry in which the emotions and yearnings of the human heart are expressed in terms of the changing moods of nature over the twelve months of the year. In this form of poetry, the mood of nature in each particular month (of the Indian calendar) depicts the inner agony of the human heart which in most cases happens to be a woman separated from her

spouse or lover.” (Sikhwiki, Web) Guru Sahab’s *Baramaha* is regarded the greatest for its picturesque descriptions of nature and the various colours of nature are reflective of the changes in the mood which one undergoes in the process of loving the Divine. The *Baramaha* is divided into seventeen stanzas and begins with the yearning of the bride “Yea, without my Spouse, I am in Pain”. He defines the ‘True Bride’ as the one who is merged in her Lord and if the Lord be pleased with her then only she is considered to be ‘true’ and faithful. The first four stanzas are the introductory, twelve for the twelve months of the year and the last giving the essence as a whole. Guru Sahab writes and begins each month of the year with the word “*Bhalla*” or blessed as whatever the Bride experiences is the Lord’s gift to her it also symbolizes the equanimity of mind even though she cries for the union with the Lord.

Each month can be characterised as:

- *Chet* or *Chaitra*: Bumble bee hums in joy, woods are in bloom, *Koel* sings on the mango tree.  
In *Chaitra* a bride will be at peace only when she finds the Spouse at her home. The bride undergoes a paradoxical state of mind. While the Nature is blooming with joy the bride is being sorrowful because of her separation.
- *Vaisakh*: Trees clothed in new leaves. The bride strikes a deal with the Lord that if He accepts her in the month of *Vaisakh* she would become priceless. The month in which the land, commerce and farmers rejoice in the same way Guru Nanak shows that the one who gains union in this month becomes priceless.
- *Jeyshtha*: The mood changes as the month of *Jeyshtha* is the hottest month and the earth burns like an ‘oven’. All the creatures stay inwards in the cool in the same way the Bride is asked to reflect on the Name of the Lord for she will find him within.

The three months of summer reflect the gradual change in the soul within. Though summers begin joyously but as the heat increases the suffering begins. Hence in the spiritual life also if one doesn't go deep within and doesn't contemplate on the Name of the Lord the initial union with the Lord cannot take place.

- *Asarh*: Scorching heat of the sun brings difficulties to all. The cricket wails and so does the bride. But the true Bride doesn't forget the Name and her Lord, and doesn't forget her task of reflecting on the Name. For her the Lord is with her 'in Life and Death'.
- *Shravan*: In the month of *Shravan*, though the earth is cooled from the heat of the sun but the wails of the Bride find no relief. Her beloved is in far off lands "*pir pardesi*" the rain and thunder terrifies her and she can get no sleep. But Nanak suggests, "Blessed is the Bride who Merges in the Being of her Lord." (SGGS, 1061)
- *Bhadon*: In *Bhadon* the singing of the peacocks, the *Chatrik* bird all try to lure the bride from her path. The energy of the 'mosquitoes', 'snakes' also lure her but they are mere enticements which tempt her from her path. But Nanak suggests, that with Knowledge of the Lord "go wherever thy Lord is." (SGGS, 1061)
- *Asuj*: The month of *Asuj* is the time when the bride is in dual mind. The greying of her hair symbolizing old age scares her as she still has been unable to meet her beloved. The forthcoming season of winter also makes her heart tremble as she believes the meeting will become even more difficult. She states, "Before me is the summer (of death), behind me the winter (of life) and seeing this play, my mind wavers." (SGGS, 1061) But the faith rekindles the moment she realizes that with time the boughs are ripened with sweet fruits. Therefore this faith makes her trust her Guru who will help her unite with the Lord.

- *Kartik*: The symbol of the 'Lamp' is prominently used in this stanza. Guru Nanak states that when the lamp of belief is lit with the light of Knowledge and filled with the oil of love then a bride truly realizes Her Lord.
- *Maghar*: It is the month in which the Bride gets engrossed in the songs of the Lord in the company of the poets and singers. Hence her woes are reduced.
- *Poh*: The month of *Poh* is the month of realization. The bride realizes the unity of all beings be it egg-born, foetus-born or earth-born. She realizes that the light of the One Supreme Lord is in them. Though the image of sapped fruits and grass is used in the beginning of the stanza, but this weakening image is contrasted with the hope of the bride that she will be emancipated by her 'colourful Lord'.
- *Magh*: This month calms the grief of separation of the bride. She is now awakened to the knowledge that the 'pilgrim abides within.' The bride thus utters, "...to taste the Great Essence of the Lord's worship alone is to bathe in the Holy waters." (SGGS, 1062) Hence the bride is awakened and she realizes that the Lord can be realized by contemplating the Holy Name.
- *Phalgun*: *Phalgun* is the month of blessedness. The ego vanishes, and as the Lord is realized the bride is decked in gold, silks, necklaces and garlands. As Nanak states, "When the Guru-God United the Bride with Himself, she found her (True) Home." (SGGS, 1062)



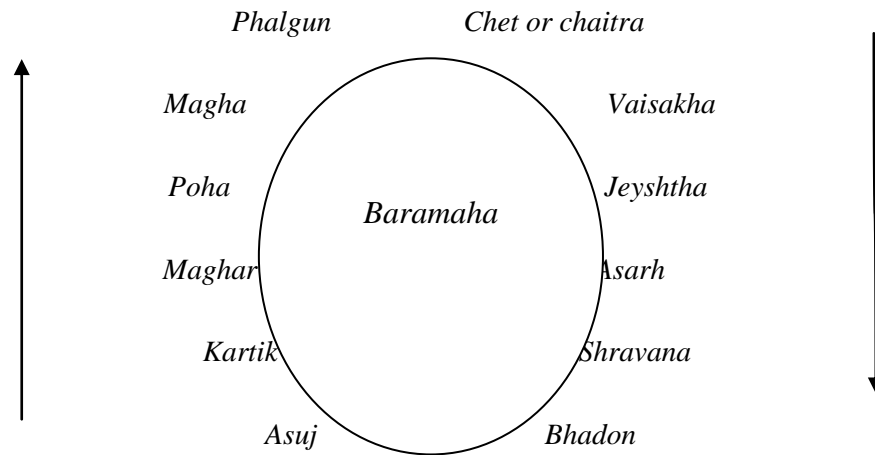


Fig. 2. The Pattern of *Baramaha*

In the concluding stanza of the *Baramaha* Guru Nanak states that all the twelve months, the six seasons, the lunar and the solar days, the hours, the minutes, the seconds as “*bhale*” blessed for they are spent in remembering the Lord.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s *Patti Likhi* in the *Raag Asa* and *Dakhni Oankar* in the *Raag Ramkali* make use of the alphabets from the *Gurmukhi* and Sanskrit scripts and with each letter Guru Sahab has described the supremacy of God and that human ego is a hindrance on the path which takes us to our Lord. *Patti Likhi* comprises thirty five stanzas, each stanza is introduced with a letter of the *Gurmukhi* alphabet. From stanza nine to thirty-three, the order followed is exactly that of the *gurmukhi* alphabets. The first four stanzas (*Sassa*, *Ivri*, *Oora* and *Gangaan*) state that the ones who are attuned to the Lord are truly blessed. They are not afraid of the “Account” as their life is spent serving their Lord. The stanzas that follow warn mankind against Ego, old age and also ignorance. He even states that one cannot win over the Lord by mere flattery or by worrying about the future. The cycle of birth and death also ends when one is attached to the Lord.

**Nanna:**

He in whose heart Pervades the Lord, he alone Sings the Lord's Praise:  
The Lord Himself Unites him with Himself and then he is born not again (into  
the world of Illusion). (SGGS, 429)

From stanza nineteen onwards the tone changes into an anxious one as the soul struggles amidst the trials and tribulations of life and it finds it difficult to 'swim' across this 'sea of material existence'. Guru Sahab states that *karmas*, the deeds one has committed in one's life are all accounted for in the end. Therefore it is only when one gives away the worldly attachments and is able to free oneself from the clutches of *Maya* that one is truly able to unite himself with the Lord. Thus Nanak as the "Lord's poet" proclaims,

There is no other Giver but thy Lord, who Creates and then Sustains thee.  
So, Contemplate thou the Lord's Name and Merge in it: and gather ever the  
Profit of the Lord's Name. (SGGS, 431)

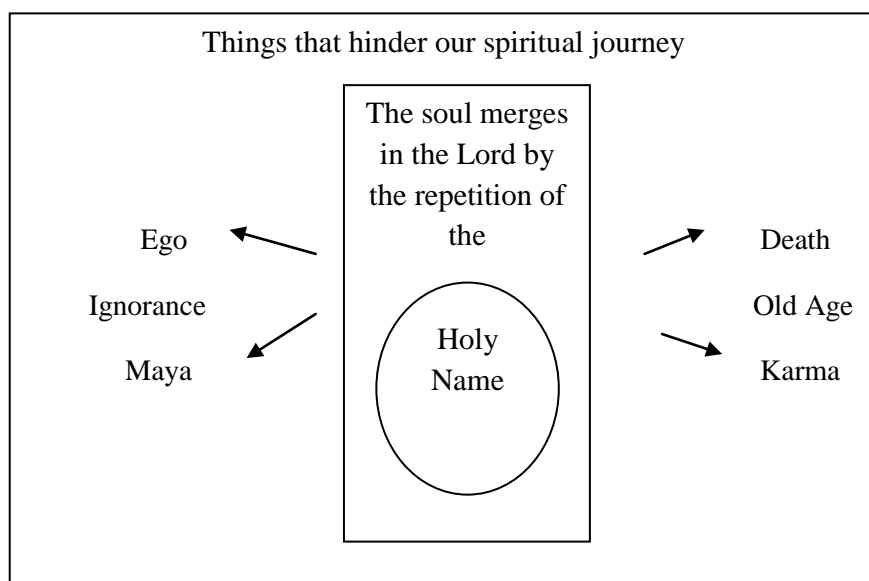


Fig. 3. Presentation of the hindrances that distract the soul on the spiritual path

*Dakhni Oankar*, is given this name as it is believed that it was addressed to a priest whom Guru Sahab met on his visits to various parts of the country. The priest is said to have belonged to the southern parts (*dakhan*) and therefore, the *bani* was called as *Dakhani Oankar*.

According to some philosophers the term *Dakhni* is an adjective for the term *Oankar* while some others believe that it is the musical measure *dakhani* that has been used in the *bani*. The *bani* contains fifty-four stanzas and each stanza begins with a letter from the Sanskrit alphabets. *Dakhani Oankar* opens with verses in praise of God who is remembered as the Creator of all that exists; of time with all its different cycles; and of the entire universe. Then follows the verse of *rahau* (pause) indicating the central theme of the *bani* :

O Pandit, why writest thou of strife and involvement?  
Pray, write only the God's Name, by the Guru's Grace. (SGGS, 885)

The *bani* emphasises on ethical and spiritual teachings. Men whose deeds fall short of their professions have been called moving corpses, i.e. corpses which only breathe. They are dead, spiritually. But even those so degraded have a chance of saving themselves if only they make a total surrender to the "will of God" - *Hukam*. If such a person devotes himself to *Naam*, his mind would be cleansed of worldly temptations and cravings.

Grace of the Guru is a decisive factor in this process of spiritual regeneration. Temptation is the cause of suffering and sinfulness. Only those guided by the Guru's wisdom overcome it. No rituals can be of any help, nor any intellectual or scholarly accomplishment. Renunciation of the world and ascetic practices are of little avail. The real *pandit* or wise man is he who follows the path shown by the Guru and remains united with God while performing his worldly duties.

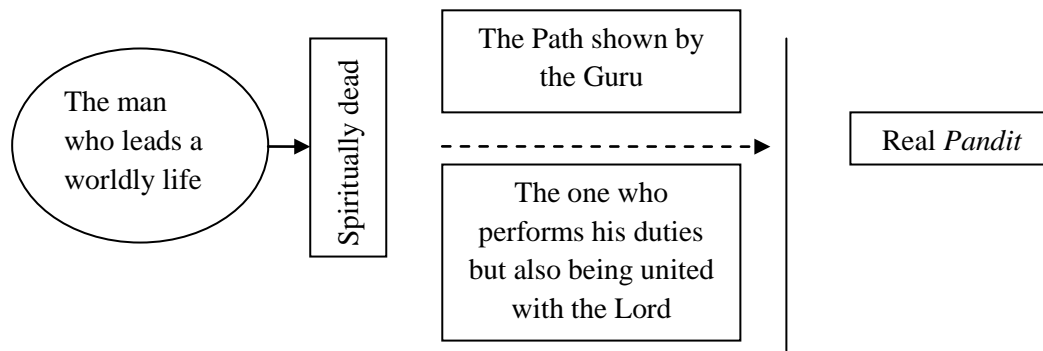


Fig 4. Presentation of the message in the *Dakhni Oankar*.

*Siddh Gosht*, one of the pious *bani*s of Guru Nanak Dev is set in the form of questions and answers. It recounts the meeting of Guru Nanak Dev with a group Hindu ascetics (*Siddhs*) while journeying towards the eastern regions of India. When he arrived at Gorakhmata, or a temple of Gorakh, he met some ascetics who had renounced the worldly life to live a pious life of ascetics living in the caves. These ascetics condemned Guru Sahab for his knowledge and teachings to which Guru Sahab replied politely and told them of the importance of fulfilling one's duties and the importance of the Name in one's life. He even told them about the Creator, His Creation and how all share the same spark of enlightenment. Some of the important truths conveyed by Guru Sahab in the *bani* are enumerated as below:

- God dwells in all of us. He is the 'nucleus' of each and every being on this planet.
- *His Will*: Guru Sahab as the disciple of the Lord works as per His Will.
- *Cross the Sea of Material Existence*: The mind when attuned to the Word makes one float like the 'lotus' or 'duck' across the 'sea of Material Existence'.
- *How to reach Guru's door*: When truth and the Lord's True Name surround the mind and one is filled with Love for the Lord, is when one is united to the Creator or reaches His door.

- *On Renouncing the world:* Guru Sahab says that if one leads a controlled life with the Name of the Lord in ones mind then by living at ones home only he can get closer to the Lord.

- *True Yoga:* He says,

O Yogi, let the Lord's Vision be thy coat, thy ear-rings and thy wallet:  
And Dwell thou only on the One Lord in all the twelve (sects) of Yoga, and let  
His only Path teach thee the Wisdom of the six Shastras.  
If one instructs one's mind thus, one is sorrowed not again.  
If one knows thus, through the Guru, one Knows truly the Way of Yoga.  
(SGGS, 895)

- *The Egocentric:* He is the one who strays from his path that reaches the Lord. He is scared of death and full of doubts he wanders in wilderness.
- *The Gurumukh:* He abides by the Name of the Lord. He has fear of God in him. The doubts of union with the Lord do not worry him. He becomes free from the cycle of birth and death. He is attuned to the Name.
- *How to still one's ego:* By repeating the Name of the Lord the ego is stilled.
- *How is one able to overpower death:* For the one who utters the Name or Word of the Lord "Time and death devour one not." (SGGS, 900)
- *Existence of the soul even before the creation of this earth:* Guru Sahab says,

"When there was no human body nor heart, the Mind abided in the Absolute Lord in Detachment."  
"When the lotus of the navel supported not the vital air, then it abided within itself, Imbued with the Lord's love.  
When there was no form, no sign, no individuation, then the Word, in its Essence, abided in the Absolute God. (SGGS, 902)

- *How one merges in its Source:* By stilling one's ego, accepting the power of the Name and being attached to it one comes in communion with Him.
- *Man is sacrifice to the one who knows His state:* Guru Sahab writes in the conclusion that He cannot be described as 'manifest' or 'unmanifest' for it is beyond the

understanding of man. But by being attuned to His Name and following His Command one can get closer to Him.

“O God, Thou alone Knowest Thy State, what can a mere man say?” ....  
 “Thou, my Eternal Lord, hast staged thy own Play: it is through the Guru that one Knoweth.  
 Thou Thyself pervades all ages, O God, for, without Thee there is not another.”  
 (SGGS, 903)

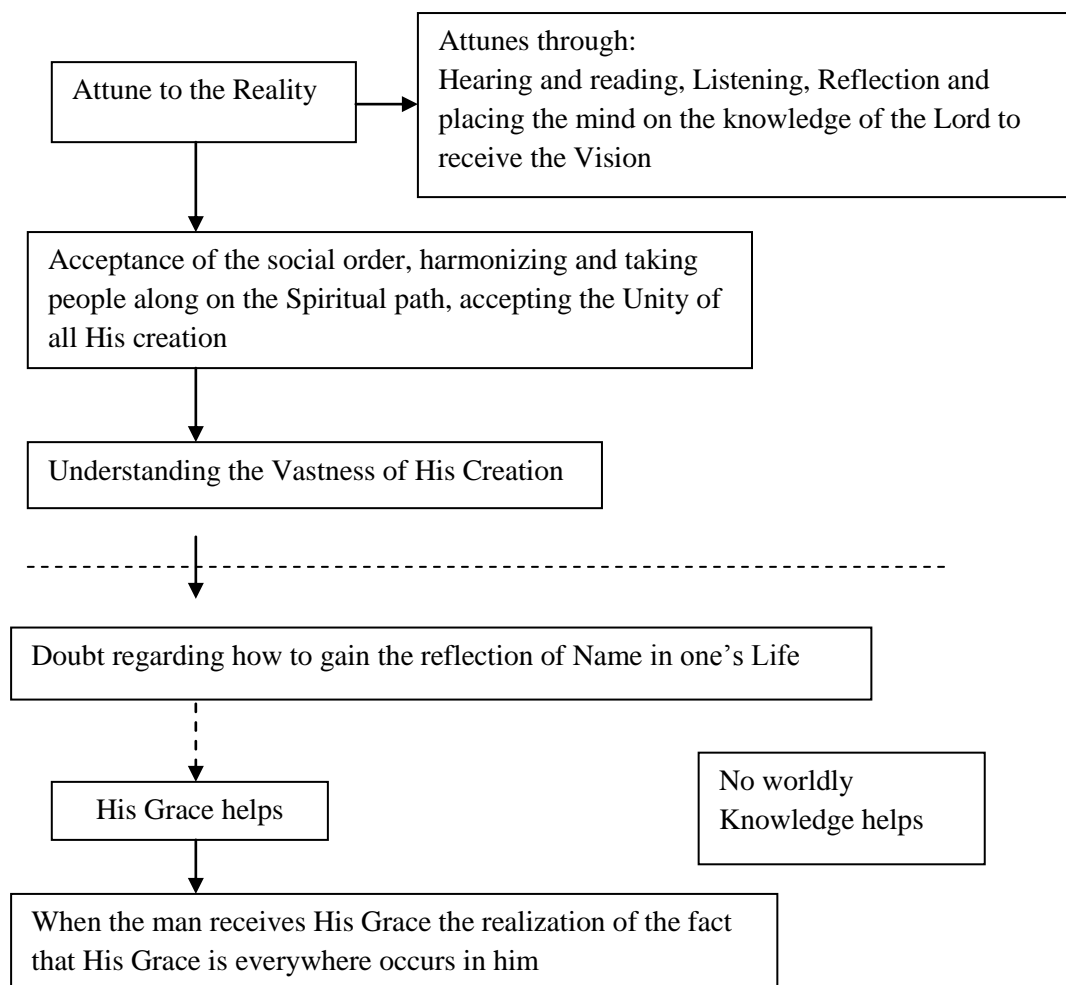
*Japji Sahib* is regarded as the greatest *bani* of Guru Nanak Dev Ji it is said to contain the essence of all his teachings. It forms the crux of the message given and the path shown by Guru Sahab to his disciples. It forms the opening *bani* of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. It is also known as “The Seeker’s Path” as it tells of the path that leads to the Lord. The opening *shaloka* of the *Japji Sahib* called the *Mool Mantra* “enunciates the relationship of a human being with the Creator and sketches out a strategy for the evolution of human consciousness to God consciousness.” (Lal, Web) It is one of the writings where Guru Sahab’s words are given the status of ‘Divine Revelation.’

The *Mool Mantra* contains thirteen words which describe the attributes of the True Lord and then state the importance of reflecting on the Name of the Lord for he is, “True in the Beginning, True in the Primeval Age, True He is and True He shall be.” (SGGS, 1) The *Japji Sahib* divided into thirty eight *pauris* (stanzas) describes the ways by which one can merge in the True Lord. The *Japji Sahib* can be broadly divided into three sections. The first section comprising the first seven stanzas bring to light the ways by which one can get closer to the Lord, that is by silencing one’s Ego and abiding by the Will of the Lord. The next twenty stanzas give a step by step advice to the seeker of the way in which the Name takes one closer to the Supreme Being. The next four stanzas describe the experiences of those who have had the contact with the Divine. The last part which is the concluding and the most important part describes what the seeker undergoes during the spiritual journey. It is a continuation of the

second part but it describes the spiritual path in greater detail. This spiritual path is divided into the stages called the *khands* (realms) and these are:

- *Dharam Khand* (Realm of Righteousness or Moral Living),
- *Gyan Khand* (Realm of Knowledge),
- *Saram Khand* (Realm of Spiritual Effort),
- *Karam Khand* (Realm of Grace), and
- *Sach Khand* (Realm of Truth or Eternity)

The path of realization can be understood with the following diagram:



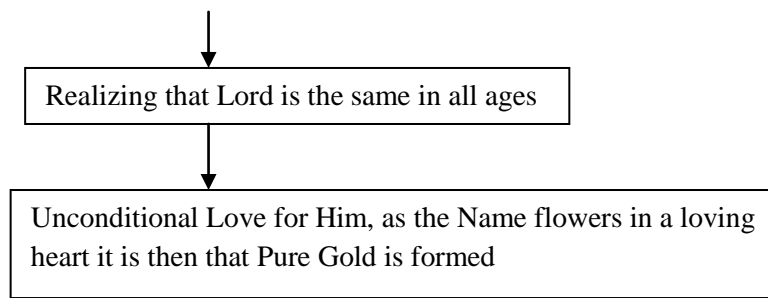


Fig. 5. Presentation of the *Japji Sahib*.

Dr Sohan Singh gives a scientific analogy of the way in which the spiritual realization as stated in the *Japji Sahib* occurs in man. He states that the way a scientific problem occurs in the mind of man and he starts working on it objectively and systematically in the same way Guru Sahab has stated the path of spiritual realization in the *Japji Sahib*. He writes:

The process of the *Japji* of seeking and arriving at the Vision of Reality, has... a strange resemblance to what we call the scientific method of thought. In that method too, we first define our problem and our approach, as has been done in the first seven stanzas in the *Japji*. We then collect all the data on the problem and proceed to reflect on the inter-relationship of the phenomena. In this way we form some sort of structure, but the final solution defies us and we feel restless and baffled. Next, there comes a stage when we give up all effort to delve out a solution, but suddenly, and sometimes when we least expect it the solution breaks on us. After that we gradually realise the expanding significance or application of our new insight. When the insight pertains to a fairly large arc of our thought, we find that it entirely changes our mode of thinking. (S. Singh, n.p.)

There are a number of commonalities in the belief systems and method of expression of Baba Farid and Guru Nanak Sahab. They both gave importance to following the Guru or *Pir* or the Master for he is the one who awakens the mind to tread on the spiritual path. Love for the Divine has also been given utmost importance by the two saints as the unconditional Love for the Lord helps the soul reach Him. Also the two saints propagated that by being humble and by following honest means in life and by helping one's fellow human beings, the Grace of the Lord



can be experienced. They both believed that by remembering the Holy Name of the Lord one can gain His acceptance and can reach the home of the Lord.

We also see a number of differences in their approaches, Baba Farid as a staunch Sufi saint preached of renunciation and the importance of leading a strict life of penance and hardship whereas Guru Nanak Dev Ji taught one to realise the divinity in oneself. Though the two poets were not contemporary but when Guru Sahab received the verses of Baba Farid from one of his successors Sheikh Ibrahim he presented his comments on his teachings. These comments are also found in the *Shalokas of Sheikh Farid* present in the *Raag Jijavanti* of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

The difference between the idea of Grace as revealed by both the saints can be analysed as follows:

Farid says,

When the Night is young, it yields Flower; when old, the Fruit.  
Yea, they who keep ever Awake in God, alone are blest. (SGGS, 1314)

While Guru Sahab states,

All Bounties are God's: but one can force not God's hands.  
Some attain them not, while awake; while the others He wakes up and Blesses!  
(SGGS, 1313)

Baba Farid shows the urgency that as early as possible one should start working towards the enlightenment of the soul because those who are 'awake' are the ones who are blessed. Guru Sahab suggests that God's grace cannot be forcefully asked for. Some even though they might follow a strict code are not blessed while for some God keeps his blessings ready and awakens them to the path of enlightenment.

In another place Guru Sahab has commented on the harsh penance which Farid Ji suggests his disciples to follow, Farid Ji writes,

Body burns like an oven, bones flame like firewood, when feet are tired, I would still walk with head if I can find God. ||119|| (SGGS, 1314)

To which Guru Sahab has commented:

Heat not thy body like an oven, burn not thy bones like firewood. What harm have your feet and head done you; behold the beloved in your own heart. ||120|| (SGGS, 1314)

In the above lines Guru Sahab has highlighted that by giving pains to one's body one cannot find the solace of communion with God. The pains induced on the body may not give one the vision of the Almighty. Hence, it is the repetition of the Holy name which is of utmost importance for a disciple to follow on the path of enlightenment.

In one of his *shalokas* Baba Farid suggests that one should tear away his clothes and wear the coarse material which takes one closer to the Almighty. But according to Guru Sahab the garb of a person does not signify whether he would be rewarded or destroyed on the spiritual path. He states.

Why do you tear apart your fine clothes, and take to wearing a rough blanket?  
O Nanak, even sitting in your own home, you can meet the Lord, if your mind is in the right place. ||104|| (SGGS, 1314)

A detailed analysis of the verses of these saint poets reveals the idea of love for the Lord and that the faith in the Lord's Grace can bring spiritual enlightenment in man. Through the use of metaphors and symbols as well as references from daily life these simple but profound verses convey the message of love and brotherhood to all.

**Chapter IV:**  
**Colours of Love:**  
**The Fusion of the Shades of Union, Longing and Pain in the Poetry of Bulleh Shah**  
**and Waris Shah**

“Lovers don’t finally meet they are in each other all along.”

- Rumi

Love has been given a high stature in mystic poetry. As stated by William C. Chittick, “Love totally dominates and determines the Sufi’s inward and psychological states.” (Chittick, 194) In the romantic verses of the thirteenth century Sufi poet Rumi and in the poetic works of the Punjabi Sufi poets, love occupies an important place. According to Rumi:

Someone asked, “What is Love?” I replied, “Ask not about these meanings.

When you become like me, then you will know. When He calls you,  
you will recite its tale.” (Chittick, 195)

The *Quran* calls love as “*hub*” or “*mahabba*”, and the Sufis call it “*ishq*” and give worldly attributes to love which has spiritual depths. Mathew Kelly in his article on “Love in Sufi Poetry” stated that:

Using the word *ishq* in a religious context means that:

Love is no longer merely an expression of gratitude for the blessings of God; it is no longer content with rigorous asceticism and meticulous ritual observance. It becomes an absolute necessity, entailing neither enjoyment nor alleviation, but intensifying as the reciprocity of the lover and the loved comes into effect. (Kelly, PDF File)

On a spiritual plane the struggles which a lover undergoes are symbolical of the hardships experienced by the devotee on the spiritual path. Love therefore becomes the measurement of the intensity of faith of a devotee. As mentioned previously, this process has

been termed as '*unio mystica*'. The struggles take a circular pattern and each phase of union, separation and re-union reflects the spiritual journey and the level of devotion of the seeker.

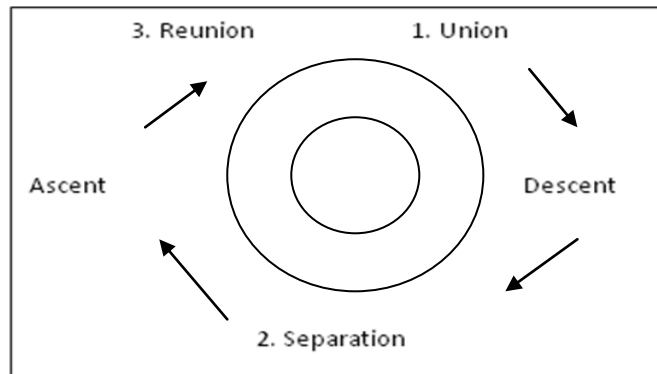


Fig. 6. The presentation of *unio mystica*.

On the spiritual path “union” refers to the initial union, of innocence and ignorance. This stage reflects the primordial state that is the state of union a child is born with. As reflected in the following lines of the poem “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood” by William Wordsworth:

Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep  
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,  
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,  
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—  
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!  
On whom those truths do rest,  
Which we are toiling all our lives to find, (Wordsworth, Web)

The poet tries to explain the purity which a child has in his heart, but this purity diminishes as a child starts experiencing the crude realities of life. And hence the poet wishes that he is able to take this “natural piety” forward with him. The state of initial union is also linked with “ignorance”. Initially the soul or *ruh* is pure, untouched by worldly influences but as it comes in contact with the worldly aspects it acquires knowledge of the world which further separates it from its source.

“Separation” on the spiritual path, is actually the “fall” from the divine state of purity and sanctity of the soul. The soul, engulfed by the materialistic world loses its divine potential. Man suffers as he no longer enjoys the state of communion with God. The soul struggles in the world. It is in this state that man has to crush his ego or self and embark on the spiritual journey. It is through love that this journey can be completed and soul may reach its spiritual abode. Lalita Sinha defines it as:

...for the mystic, this process is voluntary, embarked upon by the sole motivation of Love (*ishq* or *prema*). In other words, the underlying motive of Love is not as means to an end (the reward of Heaven) but the end in itself (Love for Love’s sake). Thus, the mystic path of the Sufi (*Turuq* or *suluk*) ...is depicted by the travails of the soul. (Sinha, 48)

Once the soul has purified itself through pure and intense love, it experiences the blissful state of “re-union”. Being the last stage on the spiritual path, this stage marks the zenith of the journey. The reward for the physical effort which man puts in and the pain which he bears for union with the Divine is achieved once the soul gets a glimpse of the Divine light. It is the stage when the veil of illusion is removed and the soul gets the pure vision of the Divine. As Al-Ansari writes,

He travels with whoever looks for Him,  
and having taken the seeker by the hand,  
He arouses to go in search of himself. (Al-ansari, Web)

The final re-union is the stage of disillusionment with the world leading to enlightenment when the soul is free from all the ties of the world and is ready to be united with the Lord.

When we analyse the poetic works of Bulleh Shah, we see a wide variety of emotions depicted by the poet which include love, the lighter side of love, the troubles and tribulations of

separation and then the bliss which surrounds once the separated one gets united with its beloved. In Bulleh Shah's poetry, symbolism has been used but here it is the love of a disciple for his master or of a *darvesh* for his *pir* or a *guru*. As has been stated in the previous chapter the spiritual life of Bulleh Shah can be divided into three phases and each phase reflects the stage of "union", "separation" and "re-union". The initial meeting with his *pir* Shah Inayat has been termed as "union". "Separation" takes place when he showed disrespect to his master due to which his master leaves him. "Re-union" takes place when the master agrees to accept Bulleh Shah again as his disciple. It is after this re-union with his master that he is gifted with of the vision of the Supreme Lord. The sincerity and maturity that grows in Bulleh Shah during this period of separation is reflected in the poems he wrote during this time.

The journey towards fulfilment is best expressed through suggestive images and symbols. In the early *Qissas* or love legends like *Sassi Puhnu*, *Laila Majnu*, *Mirza Sahiban* and even *Heer Ranjha* the poet uses the story of the lovers to symbolically describe the journey of a seeker on the spiritual path. The struggles and the rewards experienced on this path by the lovers are similar to those of the seeker. Waris Shah's *Heer* written in the form of an epic is divided into six parts and an epilogue. Each part is significant as it tells of the journey of the two lovers. The six parts have been given titles which inform us of the trajectory of the path of love as experienced by the two lovers. The first three parts depict the journey from the first meeting of Heer and Ranjha, their secret love which is revealed to their families and their separation with the interference of the families and the village *Qazi*, to the marriage of Heer to Saida against her will. While Heer is married and sent away, Ranjha becomes a *jogi* and roams from village to village. Eventually he reaches Rangpura and accidentally meets Sehti, Heer's sister-in-law. When Heer is told of the presence of her lover in the village, she rejoices and prays to Sehti to take her letters to Ranjha. They plan to elope and reach Takht Hazara, where they plan to get married after being accepted by their families. But deluded by the Sials and

Kaidu, Heer is poisoned and Ranjha kills himself when he hears of Heer's death. The world set them apart but in death they are united.

In a detailed analysis of the works of Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah, the three phases of:

- Union,
- Separation, and
- Re-union

emerge clearly.

The meeting of Bulleh Shah with his master Shah Inayat took place after Bullah was able to impress his master with his spiritual inclinations. It is also believed that he impressed Shah Inayat with his miraculous abilities and therefore was taken by the master into his protection. Bulleh Shah's historians point out:

Bulleh Shah had all those virtues in him which Shah Inayat was looking for in a disciple. He opened his inner treasure and placed it before him... he got the vision, he became oblivious of his surroundings and, in that state of rapture, he proclaimed the gift of his inner grace in the manner of Mansur. (Puri, 9)

In the beginning Bulleh Shah spent all his time with his master. In his master's company he was always eager to know about the spiritual truth and the ways in which he could achieve higher stages of spirituality. His *kafi* "Ecstasy of Love" *piaaraa saanoon mithharaa naa laagdaa shoor*, depicts the joy one gets when the mystical truth dawns on him. No company but his own is enough to give him the pleasures of the Almighty. As "a new flower" blossoms, in the same way the inner conscience of the seeker awakens as he realizes the spiritual truth. Using the image of a young girl, he writes that her cries of "I am dying of rapture" symbolically refer to the pleasure of the inner reflections of the soul on the Name of the Lord. The "noise" of

the outer pomp and show (rituals and beliefs) brings out a contrasting picture to her pleasure of the Holy Name. The rituals confuse and give no solace to the young girl. Hence:

“O Bullah, if you love your Master truly,  
He will shower on you a thousand blessings.  
You take this vow in all sincerity:  
I shall ever abide with my Beloved.” (Bulleh Shah, 209)

In one of the incidents quoted by Puran Singh in his book *The Spirit of Oriental Poetry* Bulleh Shah met a girl, who was braiding her hair to look attractive for her husband. Overjoyed with the idea of impressing his master, Bullah asked the girl to braid his hair too “For I, too may meet my Lord?” He absorbed himself in the Godhead of his Master. He had shed away his masculine pride and even the social norms did not bother him. In Sufism the master is regarded as the boat that takes the disciple across the sea of existence (life) and helps him reach the shore which leads to the Almighty. As stated:

In the Sufi tradition, saints have regarded the *Murshid* as the ladder for reaching the formless Lord. The *Murshid* is the mirror which reflects the glory of the God. Bulleh Shah has called the physical form of the Master the bridge that takes the disciple to his Master’s real form. He states that unless one is in love with the form, there can be no love for the formless One. (Puri, 104-5)

Thus the first step on the spiritual journey is to love the master as he is the one who can help the disciple pave the path towards spiritual awakening.

The image of wifely devotion and the master as “spouse”, “husband”, “lord”, “Friend” and “beloved” can be commonly seen in later Sufi poetry. Bulleh Shah’s poetry gives vent to the feminine emotions of love of the poet which he experienced for his master. There is also a kind of playfulness that can be noticed in Bulleh Shah’s *kafis*, as he not only teases his beloved but also brings out his love in the manner of joy and ecstasy. The images of village girls dancing



and singing, show the mirth and liveliness with which a young girl greets her new found love.

Bulleh Shah praises his master and writes:

Shah Inayat is my Master, who has come to grace me.  
All my wrangles and strifes are over.  
Who can now delude me? (Bulleh Shah, 12)

Like a wife waiting for her groom on the “nuptial couch”, Bulleh Shah shares his delight stating:

Inayat will come to nuptial couch;  
I am in great delight. (Bulleh Shah, 12)

The knowledge of the Almighty that dawned on him would not have happened if it was not for Shah Inayat’s guidance. He writes:

Says, Bullah, “Ever since I found Shah Inayat,  
The Lord has taken abode in me.”  
Come, Beloved, fold me in Your arms,  
Why this quarrel? (Bulleh Shah, 12)

The image of “fold me in your arms” depicts the plea of the disciple to his Master to take him in his shelter. Ishwar Dayal Gaur makes this point clear by stating:

....masculine denominations- like *pritam*, *prabhu*, *kant*, *sain*, *shah*, *sahib*, *suhag*, *sajan* and *mitter* —... Bulleh Shah picked up to address his He- Beloved in order to communicate his erotic relationship with him. These names are the essence, qualified by attributes. A woman also seeks these attributes or ideals in her social spouse. A Sufi’s Beloved is the sweetest, greatest, protector, erotic, worth remembering, graceful, most loved, vital, friend, companion, helper, dear one, owner of wealth and boundless. God is also bridegroom (*Suhag*) without whom a Sufi ever remains incomplete and insatiate. (Gaur, 241)

Bulleh Shah gave up his family and friends and also the luxuries of his life as he belonged to a high caste Saiyyid family, and started living in the lowly shelter of his Master. The society mocked him for leading a life of poverty but he ignored them and called his Master, his religion. He writes:

I left my parents to take Your shelter,  
O my Beloved King Inayat!  
Now honour this bond of love,  
For I am entirely in Your hands.  
Pray, walk into my courtyard. (Bulleh Shah, 12)

He states that a master helps the disciple to experience all the colours of life. The master is thus one who can “embellish the soul with spiritual apparel and jewellery and transform a widow into a bride.” (Puri, 13) The joy of meeting his master is similar to that of a young girl who meets her beloved for the first time. The *kafi* “Deep colour!” *jo rang rang'iaa goorrhaa rangiaa* is an example intense feeling of love for his Master. He states that his master has granted him so much delight that he is not able to express it in words. The colour in which he is covered symbolises the love which transforms his very being. He becomes one with his master.

O Bullah, the Lord has come to my house;  
Entertain Him with a sequence of dances, O friend.  
Whatever colour I am dyed in, it is truly a deep colour;  
It has the glow of my Master, O friend. (Shah, 195)

The symbol of “to be dyed in the colours” of the master is also depicted in the poems of Kabir Das. In the one of his poems *Sahib Hai Rangrej Chunri Mori Rang Daari*, Kabir Das states that the master as a dyer has dyed the soul of the disciple with the bright colours of love and has removed the “dark stains” of doubt. In the “water of affection” he has dyed the disciple taking away all his “sorrows”. Thus in gratitude the disciple surrenders himself to his master.

The Master is an expert Dyer, He has coloured my veil  
 Removing the dark stains, he gave that colour of love  
 By washing which fades not but becomes brighter by the day  
 Using water of affection in the tub of feelings, He poured the colour of love  
 Rinsing away the bodily sorrows and dirt, the Expert dyed it deftly  
 The Master who dyed the veil is expert, beloved and great I surrender  
 everything to Him: Body, Mind, Wealth and Life – (Kabir, Web)

The master only enters into a disciple's life after he has tested his disciple's honesty and then only the spark of love is kindled in the heart of the seeker. Gradually this love deepens into something so powerful that the seeker knows nothing else but the need to unite with the beloved. The love one experiences on the mystical path is then regarded as the most important. S. R. Sharda describes the love depicted in Bulleh Shah's verses and states:

Love for Bulleh Shah is the essence of God. He affirms that it is a fire which is lit in the heart of man by God Himself. It is yearning for the return to God and is generated at the moment the individual self gets separated from Him. He compares the arousing of love with the piercing of a spear in the heart. (Sharda, 160)

This depiction of love forms the core of Bulleh Shah's writings. Being a pantheist he sees God in everything and everything in God. But this knowledge can only be realized when one completely surrenders to God. This love is known and understood with the help of the Guru or a master, and when this love becomes stronger the disciple moves forward on the spiritual path. He calls his heart the *vehra* or *ghar* in which when once the Lord enters can never be let out. In his *Kafi* "Ranjha is my Mecca" *hajjee lok make noon jaande* he declares that no matter how much the *qazis* tell him to worship and to go to Mecca, but for him his Lord, his master is the only Mecca. Wherever he looks he finds his *Ka'ba* in his master because his master has made him see divinity in everything.

Whichever side the Beloved is, that way the *Ka'ba* is.  
 You may check it in all the four books.

The hajis go to Mecca. My Mecca is dear Ranjha;  
My friend, I am crazy! (Bulleh Shah, 350)

The relationship or the importance of the *Guru* in a disciple's life can be understood with the following diagram:

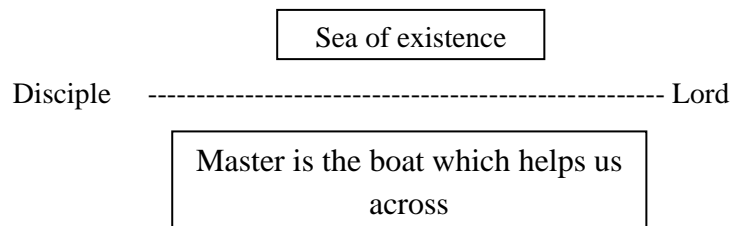


Fig. 7. The relationship of Disciple, Master and the Lord.

Waris Shah's *Heer*, the story of the young lovers, Heer and Ranjha begins with the blossoming of love in the young hearts. The youth, innocence and liveliness of the young lovers reflect the purity of the initial union. There is an element of excitement as well, since the heart experiences the bliss of love for the first time. There is joy and happiness. The 'Canto One' begins with the description of 'Takht Hazara'. It is the place where Ranjha is born. Metaphorically it is known as the "Abode of the Lord". In the epic "Takht Hazara" is the place where the epic begins and where it ends with the demise of the two lovers.

The first canto also introduces us to the self-centred family of Ranjha. Being the youngest in his family he is exploited by his brothers and sisters-in-law. He is given a barren land to take care of, Ranjha then decides to move to Jhang Sayal. Scandalized, his sisters-in-law mock him for his decision to which he rebukes them saying:

Numbered are the days  
Which man is destined at one place  
To spend. My lease of time is o'er  
And I can stay with you no more. (Dar, 6)

From here begins Ranjha's journey to reach his love as he proclaimed that "Heer of the Sayals' fair tribe Shall be my wife." (Dar, 4)

The first meeting of the lovers takes place when Heer finds Ranjha resting in the cot of her boat. Full of outrage she chides him for intruding into her private space. But with a smile Ranjha utters, "You're wonderful, my dear." (Dar, 4) Like balm the words fall on Heer's ears and she is charmed by his "moon like face". Love had shot its arrow on the two.

It happens oft, when four eyes meet,  
Love stifles spite, and indiscreet  
Ill- feelings cower and retreat;  
Love's sovereignty is complete. (Dar, 13)

This first meeting of Heer and Ranjha is similar to that of the master and disciple. Before taking a disciple into his shelter the master tests whether the disciple is worthy of his teachings or not. Ranjha condemns Heer, calls her "vain temptress", "conceited" and warns her that "Beauty is transient, fades with time". Offended by his harsh words Heer asks him to "be kind and soothe my troubled heart and mind." Ranjha was aware of Heer's intense beauty but he criticised her in order to make her realize her arrogance. After all the allegations and mockery Heer stands in front of Ranjha with her head hung in shame and promises to be his "life-long bounden slave". In return, Ranjha asks for the life-long commitment of Heer that she would not be swayed by vanity. He states:

"...if on lie  
Your troth is not reposed, if you  
To me and to yourself are true,  
Then here and now dispel my fear,  
And in the name of God do swear  
That you will bind your faith with me  
In a life-long fidelity." (Dar, 15)

Ranjha works for Heer's father, Chuchak in his farms as a cowherd. Due to his hard work the yield on the farms and the cattle improve which brings benefits to Chuchak. The revenue increases and Chuchak is impressed with the labours of Ranjha. Once when Ranjha meets the "Five Pirs" in the forest he asks them to bless him with Heer. But soon the dark clouds of separation envelope the young couple. Their pure and innocent love is revealed in an ugly manner to Heer's father. Kaidu, Heer's uncle blames her for bringing ill-fate on the family by meeting a common herdsman. The entire village, Milkhi (Heer's mother), Sultan (Heer's brother) and the village qazis scold her for ruining the family name. But her love is pure. Kaidu talks Chuchak into getting Heer married to someone else and he is sent away from the village before her reputation and the family name is spoilt. Heer admonishes them because love for her is a blessing while 'Angels' bow down to love so why not she when she has a beloved like Ranjha to worship. She states:

I shall be true in love, and gain  
On earth as well as in the plane  
Of Heavenly Ladies the unique  
Title of Heer,- the one who loved  
A humble boy, Ranjha, the meek,  
Renouncing all her pride, unmoved. (Dar, 34)

As the two lovers are separated, darkness prevails all around. The cheerful atmosphere becomes dark and dreary. The cattle which joyously grazed in the farms now move with drooping heads. The joyous music which Ranjha played on his flute earlier and which mesmerised all from far and near becomes mournful and sad.

The table here shows changes that take place when the lovers are separated:

Table 4

Changes that occur in the settings during separation

	<i><b>In Union</b></i>	<i><b>In Separation</b></i>
Atmosphere and surroundings	“charmed abode” of nature, “luscious fruits and fragrant flowers”, “paradise on earth”	“muddy ways”, the land of thugs, dry trees
Animals	“swinging tail”, “mutual love of the master and his pets”, Ranjha “pats, caresses, nudges” his animals	The cattle are disheartened when Ranjha is asked to leave Chuchak’s farms. They stopped grazing and working on the farms
Music	“melodious and loud”, wayfarers stopped to listen, his flute had cast a spell on one and all.	“sad and serene” notes that “lent a pensive fire of thwarted unfulfilled desire”

After the initial union, the period of separation follows. On the spiritual path, separation is important as it is in separation that the seeker realizes his short-comings and how he can through continuous efforts move towards spiritual upliftment and achieve the stage of final re-union with the Supreme Lord. Though the state of separation brings a lot of hardships and also creates impatience in the one who goes through it, but with continuous efforts the seeker is able to curb his weaknesses and is also able to overcome the hindrances on the path. Most essentially the ego has to be silenced to attain the bliss of union with the Almighty. Separation acts as a catalyst which encourages the practitioner to progress spiritually without any regrets. Separation tests the mettle of the seeker as at this stage he has to realize what is real and what is illusory and would it be possible for him to give up or surrender the illusions of this world to achieve the vision of the Lord. The seeker undergoes a deep introspection of his past, present and future.

On the spiritual path, the seeker frees his mind of all the illusions. It is through meditation and repetition of the Holy Name of the Lord that this awakening takes place in the practitioner. For a Sufi mystic, the Holy Name is like the “wine” which intoxicates the mind with pleasure. It is the ego which stands as a barrier to the spiritual growth, but when he completely absorbs himself in meditation then the real spirit emerges and the bliss is

experienced. Llewellyn Vaughan- Lee in his book titled *Love is a Fire: The Sufi's Mystical Journey Home*, states:

Meditation is an important technique to enable us to transcend the ego and the mind. Stilling the mind, we begin to have access to a different dimension. Initially we feel the invisible presence and effect of the beyond. But as our meditation deepens we can develop consciousness of what is beyond the ego. Then we come to know the illusory nature of the ego. (Lee, 194)

Therefore the path of separation becomes necessary. Only through separation one acquires the ability to transcend the physical.

The pain of separation and yearning for union can be well understood through the *kafis* and some of the *dohas* of Bulleh Shah. It is believed that in his ignorance Bullah was disrespectful towards his master because of which he was abandoned. His master decided not to impart any more knowledge to him. Repentant, Bullah begged his master to forgive him but in order to regain it Bullah had to prove that he really was worthy of his master's guidance. Shah Inayat's motive was to make him learn that caste, class and status are superficial and only create obstructions on the spiritual path.

During this particular period Bullah wrote verses which express the emotions of sorrow, mourning and distress. The grief of being separated from his master on the spiritual path gave him the feeling of being lost and deluded. Tasneem writes, "He (Bulleh Shah) laments the period he has to spend in *Birha* and longs for the union. His sleep has abandoned him as he spends his nights in weeping and wailing in the pain of separation." (Tasneem, 18) The *Kafis* describing this state of Bulleh Shah include: *uth challee gaaandhon yaar* "The Beloved Departs", *aa mil yaar saar lai mere* "Come, Friend", *mainnoon chhadd ga'e aap ladd ga'e* "He Deserted Me", and many more.

The titles tell of the state of mind of Bullah, as his troubled mind yearns to be united with his master. The sadness and sorrow are revealed through the images which reflect his pain.



The imagery emphasizes the lack of solace in his life and the state of torment. His popular *kafi*, *uth challe guaandhon yaar* “The Beloved Departs” deals with departure of the beloved. The beloved leaves the lover’s neighbourhood and his sudden departure fills the lover with misery. He writes:

O Bullah, away from the dear Master,  
I am neither on this shore nor across.  
O Lord, what shall I do? (Bulleh Shah, 165)

The refrain “O Lord, what shall I do?” “*rabba hun ki kariye*” reflects the intensity of the suffering. The lover finds that she alone is stranded in an unfamiliar place. The news of her beloved’s departure surrounds her and the “burning throbs rise in her heart” for she has missed seeing her Beloved. There is urgency in the tone of the poem as it tells the reader that the lover is desperate to know of the Lord and is afraid to go forward without his company. In the same way, without the Master the disciple is left alone. Not sure of where he should go, the question “What shall I do?” remains unanswered because without the Master the disciple walks through pathless woods which have no direction.

The *Kafi*, *aa mill yaar saar lai mere*, “Come, Friend!”, makes use of the symbol of “sleep” which stands for the ignorance of the disciple due to which he is separated from his Master. As he realizes his mistakes, he sees that the whole world mocks at him and is ready to make a fool of him. The *qazis* and mullahs force their rituals on him and feel pity for his loss. But confident of his love for his Lord he states that nothing can separate him from his master and his master alone can lead his “boat” across the river of life.

O Bullah, you will realize the Lord, for sure;  
Boldly announce this to your heart.  
The Beloved is right within you!  
Whom do you search for outside?  
Why get deluded in broad daylight? (Bulleh Shah, 183)

The idea of the Beloved being “right within” gives hope that no matter how much the disciple may search for the Lord outside in Holy places or in the religious texts but if he does not remember Him with all his heart, he can never find him.

The later *kafis* like *Mainoon chad ga’e aap ladd ga’e* “He Deserted Me”, *akkhan vich dil jaanee piaariaa* “Longing”, *ab kion saajan chir laa’io re* “Longing for the Master”, reflect the experience of separation. Bullah says that the pangs of separation are “sharper than swords” and “arrows of love” as they go deep inside his soul. The pain of separation is incurable; no physician or no medicine is strong enough to heal it. He repeatedly asks “Why then do you run away from me?” (Bulleh Shah, 244) The Beloved dwelled in his heart but since the time he left him, the lover is full of unease and curious to search for him. He utters “No more of this! Now no more of this!”. Desperate after the separation the lover cannot wait any more to get “the glimpse” of her Beloved and prays to bring back the light of his presence into her life.

The symbols of the buffaloes and Ranjha (as cowherd) used in the *kafi* “Longing” depict that the Beloved has sent his messengers but has not arrived himself, which increases the “flames of separation” in the lover. Bullah refers to the legend of Yusuf and Zulaikha, to show that just as Yusuf was captured and mesmerised with the beauty of Zulaikha when she lifted her veil, in the same way with the teachings of his Master he can see the beyond. But without the Master he is deprived of these pleasures.

In the bazaars of Egypt, in the manner of Zulaikha,  
You have lifted Your veil and brought me to ruin.  
In my eyes, my Beloved,  
What a longing have You aroused! (Shah, 274)

The symbol of “dance” used in the *Kafi* reflects the state of ecstasy which the disciple experienced with the help of his Master. But the “poison” of separation fills him with grief, and the “longing” cannot be curbed.

The *kafi*, *tere ishaq nachaa'ee'an*, "Come, O Physician" describes the power of the love of the disciple for his Master. The *kafi* takes a turn after the first four stanzas. It begins with the description of the pains of separation but then when the union takes place the disciple is more than thankful to his stars. The statements "cup of poison", "I shall breathe my last!" show the mental state during the separation. Bullah then prays for forgiveness and asks his mother not to deprive him from the pleasures that his Master has made him witness. Full of gratitude he writes:

O Bullah, the Lord has brought me to the door of Inayat.  
Who has made me wear garments of green and red.  
When I dance a step, I found Him same as ever, (Bulleh Shah, 185)

The symbols of "boat" and "peacock" used in the *Kafi* show the relationship between Bulleh Shah and his Master. Like the "ferryman" rows the boat to cross the river, in the same way the Master rows the "boat" of his disciple comfortably to the other side of the river. The cries of the peacock are compared to the Master who is the "*Ka'ba*" which Bullah worships has "inflicted the grievous wounds" on him and never enquired about his safety. Thus by dancing to the tune of his master, Bullah believes that he will take away all his sufferings and will bring him back into his shelter.

In the *kafis*, *naa jivaan maharaja main tere bina naa jeevaan* "I Cannot Live Without You", *saa'eean chhap tamashe moon aai'aa* "The Lord in Disguise", *eh dukkh jaa kahoona kis aage* "Pain of Love" Bullah declares that living without his master is impossible and very difficult. He sees no joy in the world when he does not have the guidance of his Master to support him. He states:

There is no fragrance in these withered flowers.  
There is no hope of His return,  
Who has gone to a foreign land.  
My love is no longer with me!  
I cannot live, Maharaj, I cannot live without You. (Bulleh Shah, 253)

Without the Master, Bullah says that our existence is meaningless. The world deludes us with all its material possessions but it is the Master who awakens us to the truth of this life.

Within us abides our Murshid.  
When I fell in love, I learnt this.  
My logic, my grammar, my polemics,  
All my knowledge was useless. (Bulleh Shah, 281)

And once the Master has blessed him with the drink of love he knows that the Lord abides in one and all.

By drinking a cup of love  
All things are forgotten!  
In every house abides the Lord!  
I find him pervading one and all. (Bulleh Shah, 281)

It is said that Bulleh Shah gained the forgiveness of his Master by dancing before him in a public gathering dressed as a woman. The Master on seeing his disciple in the garb of a woman could clearly see the innocence of Bulleh Shah and was impressed that in a public gathering his pupil was not embarrassed to ask for his Master's forgiveness.

N. S. Tasneem stated in her book *The Contours of Punjabi Poetry* that:

*Birha* is separation which implies longing for reunion. The Punjabi Sufi seeks God and craves for oneness with him. The Supreme ideal is *Fana-Fi-Allah* (the annihilation of the self in God). But the union can only be attained by identifying oneself with the attributes of God and His creation. (Tasneem, 16)

Kavita Punjabi states that the separation or *Hijr* in Sufism gives the essence of "dislocation" and "transforms them (the Sufis) into a compelling aesthetic of loss." (Punjabi, 43) Thus the separation of the Sufi depicts his being away from his reservoir of energy. The images and symbols depict this state.

The above analysis of Bulleh Shah's *Kafis* reflects the anxiety and suffering he undergoes during the period of separation. Likewise, the second and third cantos of "Heer" describe the state of separation experienced by Heer for Ranjha. She is married in the clan of the Kheras but becomes a living carcass. She shows no emotions or feelings and is also dead to the rebukes of her wedded husband. She moans:

My heart is wounded to its core,  
And like the night-bird I do wail;  
There is no friend now at my door  
To listen to my woeful tale. (Dar, 55)

The woes and cries of Heer go unheard; her sighs do not reach the ears of her parents. No one understands her plight. Her *dholi* bed is described with dark imagery which shows the depressed state of her mind for she sees nothing beautiful in store for herself in her future. In her soliloquy her troubles are revealed:

My heart sinks and my spirit quails  
To recollect the grievous wrong  
Of fate. So fleeting and so brief  
Have been the glimpses of your face  
Which I recall now in my grief,  
With unfulfilled yearnings which chase  
me,....  
The cost now I tenfold must pay  
With sorrow and with pain untold  
for many a weary night and day. (Dar, 72)

She uses the terms "stern and murderous band of Kazis", "butcher me with a blunt knife" because it is due to the interference of the qazis that she was forced to marry Saida. Her parents she calls "the cheats" for they made her part ways from her beloved.

While Heer is lamenting her fate, Ranjha calls her wailing all “sham” for he believes that Heer made him walk the path of love and then abandoned him, tempted by the riches of Saida.

Attar describes the pain of separation as follows:

The pain of love became the medicine for every heart,  
The difficulty could never be solved without love. (Attar, Web)

When in love, separation empowers the lover and encourages him to move forward. In the same way, on the mystical path separation acts as a means to free the mystic of all his doubts and shortcomings and hence emerge stronger as a mystic. Llewellyn Vaughan- Lee writes,

Longing is the sweet pain of belonging to God. Once longing is awakened within the heart it is the most direct way home. Like the magnet it draws us deep within our own heart where we are made whole and transformed. (The Golden Sufi Centre, Web)

As the year passes, Heer’ condition deteriorates.

A captive in her  
Husband’s house, Heer  
Constantly doth weep:  
The anguish of her heart allows her not a wink  
Of sleep; she has no  
Appetite and grows each  
Day more weak and weaker. (Dar, 82)

She can barely tolerate the pain of separation. Alone in the nights she keeps twisting and turning in her bed and finds no solace. Once while she was in her bed, Saida got in to sleep with her, but with her dignity Heer stopped him from touching her. Yet he pursued till she says that she

hasn't completed her prayers and then pays her gratitude to the *Panj Pirs* who saved her from Saida's touch.

The spiritual agony of Heer has also been depicted in great detail in the *Barahmaha*. Starting from the month of *Sawan* to the month of *Har*, each month shows the intensity of the pain she goes through. With each passing month of the year the wails, pain and sorrow goes on increasing.

- *Sawan*: It has been described as the darkest month, the dark clouds and rain envelope the whole area. Though the village girls are enjoying the rains and playing on the swings but Heer as a wretched bride wails in her separation from Ranjha.
- *Bhadon*: As the rains never cease to fall from the thunderous dark skies, so the tears of grief never fail to fall from Heer's eyes. She finds no solace in spinning at the wheel nor any joy in the company of other village girls. Their talks seem mundane to her for she is lost in the memories of Ranjha,

As she is tossed upon the foundering tide  
Of separation long. (Dar, 84)

- *Asuj*: In the month of Autumn, Heer believes that by praying to the lord her condition will get better. The cool night and full moon make her crave for the warmth of Ranjha. She experiences the sharp piercing pain of separation. She even curses the "hour" which made her meet Ranjha, but keeps her faith that she will be re-united to him.
- *Katik*: She compares the times she had spent with Ranjha in the "pastured lands" of Jhang Syal to the wilderness all around in Rangpur. She is made ill with loneliness and only Ranjha can cure her of this pain.

- *Maggar*: Heer yearns for the “Cherub face” of Ranjha. She says that all know of the fact that Ranjha reigns over her heart and soul. But if in this life she is not able to gain back his love, she declares that on the Judgement day she will gain what is her very own.

- *Poh*: In the wintry nights, wailing for Ranjha the pain of her separation increases.

With lashes of despair, - eyes on the door  
Longing still for a view of your sweet face. (Dar, 84)

- *Magh*: Sadness envelopes Heer. She states she would sacrifice all her bridal embellishments, her long tresses and would give up everything that makes her look beautiful. Without caring about the elders and her family she states that she would find reunion with Ranjha.
- *Phagan*: The mirth of the season is at odds with the suffering of Heer. The days when the earth is covered with “green foliage” is the time when Heer spends joyless days.
- *Chet*: While in *Chet* the village girls decorate themselves to please their husbands, Heer wanders on the streets of Rangpur like a “scare-crow” searching for her “absent lover.”
- *Baisakh*: It’s a troublesome month for Heer. ‘Bewildered and perplexed’ after her parting from Ranjha, Heer wanders on the streets and asks the astrologers as to when her stars will unite her to her love.

Life has no joys  
For her until she hears her lover’s voice.  
Her life for him she’ll offer; she indeed  
Is his eternal slave in word and deed. (Dar, 85)

- *Jeth*: The earth like a “burning furnace”. It makes her feel neglected and unloved. She questions her beloved for his neglect but gets no answer. Her mornings go in long



waiting in the heat of the sun and nights are spent yearning for her beloved. She prays to the Almighty and Holy saints to bless her with the company of her Beloved.

- *Har*: Heer continues to weep in pain and agony. No one is interested in her condition nor does she share her feelings with anyone. She is mocked at by everyone but she does not care.

In Waris Shah's *Barahmaha* we see the intense pain of separation which Heer undergoes. With every passing month the yearning and the pain increase but in the summers her suffering becomes more intense because the heat of the outside air fans the fire of longing burning inside her. His *Baramaha* depicts the miserable condition of the separated lover. While other writers show a circular pattern in their *Baramaha*, Waris Shah's is linear as it depicts the deteriorating condition of the lover in separation.

In the poetry of Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah "re-union" marks the culmination of the spiritual strife and confusion which the soul undergoes while in separation. After separation when the soul decides to give up its "I-am-ness" and when man's ego is silenced it is then that the soul fully enjoys its reunion with the Almighty. In one of his verses Rumi states:

One went to the door of the Beloved and knocked. A voice asked, "Who is there?"

He answered, "It is I."

The voice said: "There is no room here for me and thee." The door was shut.

After a year of solitude and deprivation this man returned to the door of the beloved.

He knocked.

A voice from within asked: "Who is there?"

The man said: "It is thou."

The door was opened for him. (I. Shah, 207-208)

Therefore only by complete surrender to the Beloved, can one bring about this final reunion with Lord.

Union takes place through profound love for the Lord, which brings man close to Him. Once the seeker surrenders to the Lord and gives up his doubts and ego it is then that unconditional love for the Lord is experienced. Bulleh Shah out of his contemplative experience of the Divine suggests that rituals are nothing compared to the worship of love.

Accursed be prayers, to hell with fasts,  
And let confession of faith be damned.  
Bullah! I have found the Lord within,  
And the world wanders in delusion! (Bulleh Shah, 463)

There is conviction and a sense of pride in Bulleh's verses for the lines highlight the delight in gaining the knowledge that the Lord resides within.

The *Gandhan* of Bulleh Shah makes use of the rituals surrounding the bride. She has to perform strict religious duties in her home for forty days so as to have a blessed wedded life ahead. *Gandhan* are the knots tied forty days before the wedding, forty in number, which the bride opens after every day passes and she nears her wedding day. J. R. Puri explains this as, "These forty days she is to spend in her parents' house (in this world) making preparations (by meditation) for going to the house of her in-laws (the hereafter). Thus the anxiety of marriage rituals and the bliss of union have been captured by Bulleh Shah. In the end he concludes:

Recite, "We belong to God and to God we return,"  
And behold:  
Allah pervades everywhere,  
Abdullah exists no more. (Bulleh Shah, 462)

Thus the knowledge dawns on the spirit that there is no other but only one exists.

Love for Bulleh Shah, is the strongest emotion. Belonging to the cult of Vaishnava Bhakti Sufism he believed that the One spirit of God reigns in all and he sees the light of that spirit in everyone. Therefore his *kafis bullah kee jaane zaat ishaq dee kaun* "The Essence of

Love” and also *ishaq dee navee’ on naveen bahaar* “Ever- Fresh Spring of Love” bring out the bliss one experiences in love.

When I grasped the hint of love,  
I banished ‘mine’ and ‘thine’ from me. (Bulleh Shah, 212)

Lajwanti Rama Krishna’s analysis of the final period of Bulleh Shah’s life, highlights the *advaita* philosophy that is to be found in his works. She states:

The third and the last period of Bullha’s mystic life was unique. Here he resembles no Sufi or Vaisnava of the Panjab or the rest of India. During this time he is a firm believer in *advaita* and sees that all pervading spirit God, in all and independently of all religions. Like a true vedantist he does not only see Him in friends and co-believers but in heathens and opponents also. Here lies his greatness. (Krishna, PDF File)

The happiness and pleasures he received from his final union with the Lord can also be studied through his joy highlighted in the poem “Auspicious Day”. Like the jovial girl in the poem spreads the news to her friends that her Ranjha has returned to her, in the same way Bulleh Shah was rejuvenated because of the reunion with His master and he had shared his ecstasy with all.

Bulleh Shah has struck a bargain,  
He has drunk a cupful of poison.  
He did not think of gain or loss,  
He carries overhead a bundle of sorrows.  
Come, dear friend, congratulate me on my good fortune!  
I have found my consort in beloved Ranjha! (Bulleh Shah, 154)

About the relationship of Bulleh Shah and his master, Khalid Ahmad highlights:

The most common reference to Shah Enayat in Bulleh Shah’s *kafis* comes at the end of a whole train of suffering caused by separation. The preceptor himself is the subject of longing.... In another kind of *envoi*, Shah Enayat is made to be the

source of mystical secrets.... Lastly, the *murshid* is called upon to provide solace to a Bulleh Shah deeply hurt by the socio-political realities of the times. (Ahmad, 25)

What Bulleh Shah felt for his master was not just passion and awe but also a deep sense of gratitude for the guidance and protection that his Master provided him with at all times. This relationship is also the reflection of the importance of a spiritual guide on the spiritual path, as without a guide the devotee feels lost and confused.

After Heer gets to know of Ranjha's arrival in Rangpur in the form of a *jogi*, she cannot stop herself. She sends her sister-in-law to him with a letter. The two plan to elope but Ranjha does not want an illicit relationship with Heer. He first sends her to her parents' house in Jhang Sayal and leaves for Takhat Hazara. Here with his family he plans to marry Heer in full pomp and show and then be forever united according to the true norms. Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia highlights:

He (Waris Shah) treats human love as it is—in its pure sensuous form. The source of the tragedy is the contradiction that, with Waris, the social context is both necessary and hostile to his human phenomenon. The fact that Ranjha after his abduction of Heer still wants to have social sanctions for his love through the institution of marriage is a clue to the whole nature of the tragedy as conceived by the poet. (Ahluwalia, 118)

The idea that despite following the social norms the world doesn't let them unite brings out the tragedy of their love. Heer, while getting ready for her wedding is fooled by Kaidu (her uncle) into believing that Ranjha had died of snake bite. She kills herself. When Ranjha is informed of Heer's death he poisons himself and dies. Their love which was pious, sacred and had the blessings of the *Panj Pirs* could not survive in a world where people were against them. However, later the heavens rejoiced when the two souls united.

Both lovers felt  
The joy of immortality,  
True in their love's fidelity.

Their spirits were identified.  
With the Divine; they never died. (Dar, 237)

According to an analysis of Waris Shah's *Heer* by R. K. Kuldip, the writer states that:

He (Waris Shah) is a mystic in the secular sense in which many sensitive poets are mystical in being endowed with a state of mind which is assailed by disturbing questions about the lot of life, dissatisfaction with the pieties of formal religion and its explanation of good and evil, and with agnosticism. Moreover we must not under estimate the influence of the poetic tradition which made *Heer* the vehicle of mysticism that is of love. (Kuldip, 21)

Waris Shah used his epic as a vehicle to show the mystical path of love through which the soul strives to be united with the Lord. In the struggles of Heer Ranjha he depicts the struggles of the soul on the spiritual path. Through his epic he also highlights the role which society, family, religion, religious customs and religious teachings play during the spiritual journey. These are mere obstacles which bind the soul and when the soul gets free of these, it is then it becomes one with the Lord.

S. R. Sharda in her book on Punjabi Literature comments that the love depicted in the *Qissas* especially *Heer* is not sexual. The appreciation of the persons or objects is aroused with a sense of admiration for God's creation. The writers describe the beauty of the bodies avoiding sexual connotations. She writes,

All the important Kissakars have portrayed the beauty of the heroines with the highest veneration and sanctity. No Sufi Kissa-writer of repute has downed himself to the level of describing such parts of the females as arouse sexual passion. The description of beauty of the heroines generally portrays a beautiful personality. (Sharda, 191)

As also in *Heer*, Waris Shah describes the beauty of Heer as:

Like ruby or like garnet were  
 Her glistening scarlet lips. A slice  
 Of choices damask apples rare  
 Her chin resembled....  
 Her fingers, fine as willow reeds,  
 On hands shaped like the chinar leaves  
 And wrists half-hidden in the sleeves. (Dar, 12)

The stages of union, separation and reunion can also be understood by the seven stages of Sufi path given by John A. Subhan in his book “Sufism: Its Saints and Shrines”. He states that as the soul progresses on its path to the Deity all his illusions and ‘veils’ are removed “the dark ones first and then the bright” (Subhan, 74), all the material and physical desires are silenced and the Sufi thus stands face to face with the Almighty. These stages have been explained with reference to the works of the two poets as follows:

1. *Ubudiyyat*: The stage of ‘manhood’ is the first stage of the path and in this stage the soul repents for its past sins and aspires to serve God completely. In the *kafis* of Bulleh Shah this stage is depicted by his repentance for the disrespect he showed towards his master. His plea and urge to be in his master’s shelter again can be seen in the following lines:

Without You I have gone crazy;  
 I have become a laughingstock.  
 If the Friend were to be solicitous,  
 I would then entreat Him:  
 Don’t hide behind the veil, my friend! (Bulleh Shah, 205)

In Waris Shah’s *Heer* the cries of Heer for Ranjha show her sorrow from separation and her cries that without Ranjha she has no happiness around her.

“Since I did part  
 From you, oh Ranjha, I have borne around  
 My neck a pair of stones to grind and pound  
 The grain of love into the flour of pain,

Mixing it with my tears, that fell like rain  
 Into the basin of my bosom deep  
 To make a dough of grief.” (Dar, xiii)

2. *Ishq*: Love for God is the most important stage of the path. During this stage the soul is ready to pave the way which takes him to his Lord and knows that with remembrance of Him, i.e., *dhikr* this closeness can be achieved. As an aspirant on this path he has to give up all his material possessions and therefore by leading a life of poverty he has to be true to his Lord. Bulleh Shah, in his personal life as well, had left his family and his material possessions in order to gain the spiritual knowledge from his master. Waris Shah depicts that once both Heer and Ranjha realise the hypocrisy of their familial relationships, and superficiality of their material possessions they begin to contemplate on their love and their love only becomes their strength in separation.
  
3. *Zuhd*: It is renunciation of all the sensual feelings which leads one towards spiritual awakening. The physical love has not been given importance by the two poets. It is the divine love for the master in Bulleh Shah’s *kafis* and the divine love between Heer and Ranjha that helps them to sustain during the period of separation.
  
4. *Ma’rifat*: The “knowledge” that God created this universe and we all belong to Him and that the motive of this life is to serve Him is highlighted on this stage. In the *kafi* “Creator and Creation” Bulleh Shah depicts that God is reflected in all his creation. He states:

With A\* my heart is steeped in love for the Lord;  
 I have no knowledge whatsoever of B^.

(A\*: Stands for *Alif*, first letter of Arabic, Persian and Urdu alphabets. Shows unity with God

B^: Stands for *Be* the second letter of the alphabets. Shows the other than God.)

Heer and Ranjha accept the happiness of union and the sorrow of separation as both the conditions are a gift of God for them.

5. *Wajd*: The state of “ecstasy” can be achieved when the soul is in continuous contemplation of the Lord. Bulleh Shah writes:

O Bullah, the Lord has come to my house;  
Entertain Him with a sequence of dances. O friend! (Bulleh Shah, 195)

During her separation Heer continuously remembers Ranjha and the time she had spent with him in the hope that the lovers will meet some day. When Heer gets to know about the arrival of Ranjha in the guise of a *fakir* in the town of the Kheras she desperately asks Sehti if she can take her message and asks him to meet her. As Ranjha agrees to meet her, Heer who had become like a carcass, brightens up and decorates herself to meet her beloved.

Her beauty seemed to bloom and glow,  
As throwing off the heavy chains  
Of continuous grief and woe,  
She danced with joy through fields and lanes,  
Gladdened with the bewitching sight  
Of Ranjha’s radiant face,- the light  
Of her dark eyes. God did unite  
Long-parted lovers. (Dar, 200)

6. *Haqiqat*: It is the knowledge of the “Reality” of the Lord and acceptance of the true nature of the Lord.



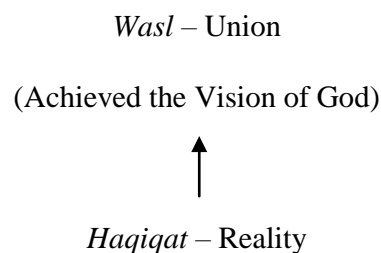
7. *Wasl*: The last stage on the Sufi path being “Union” it happens just after the “annihilation and subsistence” of the human spirit. The human spirit sees the real God and basks in His knowledge. The union with master makes gives immense pleasure to Bullah and leads to his spiritual realization, that the Lord alone exists and there are no two in spirituality.

Like the shadow of a house in ruins,  
 I revolve in my own mind.  
 If I speak, You speak with me;  
 If I am silent, You are in my mind.  
 If I sleep, You sleep with me;  
 If I walk, You are along my path.  
 O Bullah, the Spouse has come to my house.  
 My life is a sacrifice unto Him. (Bulleh Shah, 442)

The “Epilogue” of Waris Shah’s *Heer* depicts the celestial union of Heer and Ranjha and the heavenly blessings that surround them once they are united in heaven.

This journey can therefore be: “...the soul’s progress in the journey along the Path is really the upward movement of the Absolute from the sphere of manifestation back to the unmanifested state.” (Subhan, 75)

Subhan’s analysis of the seven stages in a Sufi’s life can be understood better with the flowchart given below. The flow chart depicts the stages in descending order as it in the seventh and the last stage that the knowledge and vision of God is relished by the devotee.



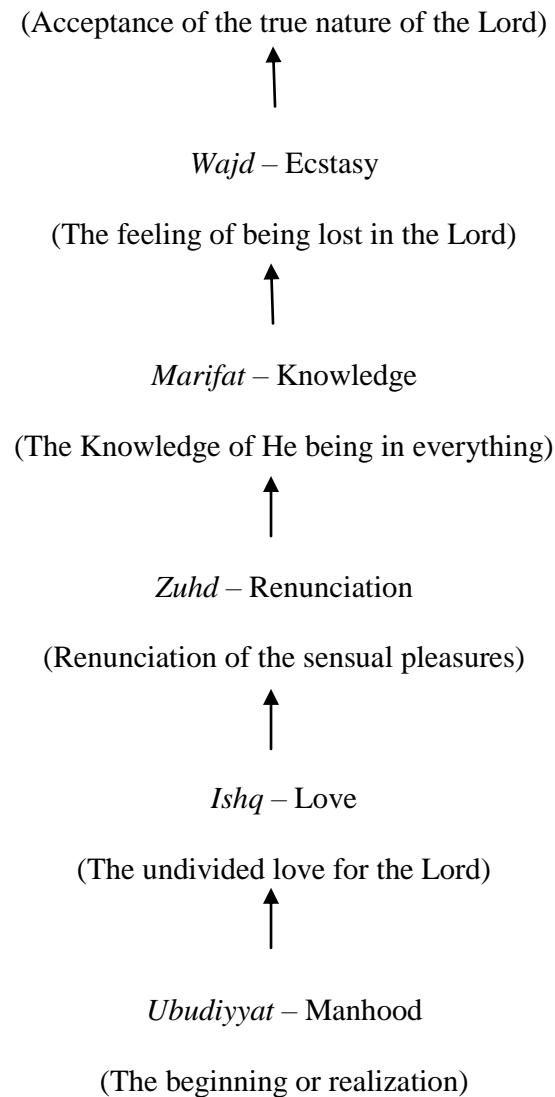


Fig. 8. Seven stages in a Sufi's Life.

In a comparative analysis of the works of the two writers we see that Bulleh Shah makes use of his personal experiences of union, separation and re-union with his master, Waris Shah uses the legend of *Heer* to show the same. Both poets depict the troubles and tribulations the seeker undergoes on the mystical path. For a Sufi, love is the major component which makes him persevere to reach the zenith of his spiritual journey. As Dr. E. Tucci Lombardozzi writes:

It is love that unifies and knows no separation; the love that sustains the soul in eternity and never cloy. In and through that love the whole is revealed as one. Spiritual knowledge is spiritual experience and the way to it is through universal love. This is the way of the heart. In the other way, the head which leads to pessimism, scepticism, agnosticism... Love solves them. (Lombardozi, iv)

Bulleh Shah's *Baramaha* is also an important symbol which provides a study of the journey of the soul from union, separation and re-union. Bulleh Shah's *Baramaha* shows a cyclical pattern and it begins from the month of *Assu* and ends with *Bhadon*. The autumn reflects the heart rending condition of the separated bride and as the winters arrive the desperation to be close to the Beloved becomes even more prominent. With spring the sufferings increase more because nature has decorated itself with new flowers but the bride burns in the pangs of separation from the Lord. As the rains arrive the bride experiences the joy of being united to her Lord. For each month Bulleh Shah writes:

- *Assu*: In the month of *Assu* the soul is distressed with the pangs of separation as the winds wither away all the leaves of the trees, in the same way the 'whirlwinds' of separation have withered away all the charms of the soul. The lines also reflect the separation of the disciple from his master. Bullah writes "His Love has ruined me" because the pain of his separated life brings him no good.
- *Kattak*: The pain of separation increases. The bride cannot put her mind into mundane tasks like spinning as her mind is too distracted with the pain. The "spinning" here refers to the mind put in meditation but now as the soul is detached from its source the longing and pain doesn't let it reflect on His name. The wife "begs for the alms of your union" but the Beloved pays no attention to her cries.

- *Magghar*: *Magghar* brings pain for the bride. The bride prays and asks people to find her Beloved and to get Him back in her house. She will be forever a servant at His feet. Bullah makes use of the simile of “sati” seated on the “funeral pyre” to compare the heat of separation which the bride suffers.
- *Poh*: The month of *Poh* (December- January) is harsh on the wife. The extreme cold weather suggests that the beloved has also deserted her. She calls out to the Beloved in her sleep but gets no answers. The “ship” of her life is “placed in the desert” but has no one to help her sail it through the sea.
- *Magh*: *Magh* is regarded as the month of bathing in the Holy rivers and ponds. Bullah does the same and remembers the Lord. He prays to his Beloved, that if he torments him then he should at least gift him with the vision of the divine.
- *Phaggan*: The nature changes its look in the month of *Phaggan*. The fields are laden with blossoms, the sun is bright, people are cheerful and all are drenched in the colours of *Holi* but the disciple is weeping for his Master.

Shafts of pain have overwhelmed me,  
Says Bullah, somebody go tell this to my Beloved  
For whom I am crying. (Bulleh Shah, 448)

- *Chet*: In *Chet* the lover cries for the Beloved as the cuckoo cries. The sound of the bird spreads in the air in the same way the yearning for the beloved and the cries of the lover have spread all around. Nature is enveloped in the warmth of the sun but the lover “moans and groans” for the lover.
- *Baisakh*: In *Baisakh* the crops ripen and are harvested. In the same way when one meditates he/ she then experiences the fruits of union. But the one who pines for the beloved suffers if the beloved does not respond to his pining. Bullah compares

himself to the other cheerful girls of the village and feels pity for himself as he is the one suffering the pangs of separation.

- *Jeth:* The heat of the scorching sun of May and June is similar to the state of separation of the Beloved. He writes that like the heat kills little creatures in this weather, similarly the arrows of separation deeply hurt the lover.
- *Harh:* As the heat increases, the burns in the heart of the lover increase. The lover grows impatient, “wailing in separation”. He is unable to cope up with the sorrow of separation.
- *Sawan:* The atmosphere becomes joyous as all the surroundings are filled with the songs of “*malhar*” and finally the beloved comes to the lover. The lover finds her lost happiness as the Beloved finally comes home.

My Joy, my Love has come home;  
Fulfilled are all my desire! (Bulleh Shah, 451)

- *Bhadon:* The month of *Bhadon* gives utmost happiness to the separated soul. With the month of *Bhadon*, the reunion brings back the joys of life. The lover sees the Lord in everything as finally she realizes that the Lord prevails in all. And finally Bullah utters:

Now, every moment my eyes long for His sight.  
Whatever happens, the Lord does it, says Bullah.  
Without the Lord, nothing else is pleasing;  
I have tasted the nectar of His Love. (Bulleh Shah, 452)

The love a seeker experiences becomes his strength and he moves forward on his spiritual journey. The two poets have made use of homely imagery and the language to

make the readers understand their message. Their works depict the complexities of the spiritual journey. Once the eyes see Him in all things of the world it is then that the seeker actually reaches the highest point of his search. The ‘music’ of God rings in his ears. His eyes see the beauties of His creation and his soul feels solace in His company.

**Chapter V:**  
**The Convergence of Textual Elements, Music and Poetry:**  
**A Stylistic Study**

Mystic poetry is said to be an exquisite combination of theme, stylistic techniques and effective use of language. The emotions and feelings of the artist permeate through the entire work. The artists may use first person narrative or even third person or indirect speech but the play of emotions and the usage of the words leave a powerful impact on the reader. This chapter aims to provide a thorough stylistic interpretation of the works of the four major writers of the Punjabi Poetry, through an analysis of the textual elements comprising- the melody and the images, figures of speech and a study of the language.

The works of the four poets, Baba Farid, Guru Nanak Dev, Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah are set against the background of Punjab. The works of Baba Farid and Guru Nanak Dev have a spiritual sub-text and are instructive and rich in symbols. The main aim of Baba Farid and Guru Sahab as revealed through their works was to enlighten the society with the spiritual message. Guru Sahab's verses are set according to his spiritual experiences and the path he wanted to show to the society. Some of the hymns are based on the conversations he had had with various *Sidhas* and religious men like in the *Sidh Gosht*. Some of his verses are also answers to the confusions which man experiences on the spiritual journey. They are the guidelines for the steps one should take to move forward on the path to enlightenment. His *bani*, which depicted the cruel times of Babur's regime commonly known as the *Babur Vani*, is a detailed description of the hardships faced by Hindus during the first Mughal invasion. The Mughals invaded India to take control of a foreign land and to subjugate the people by either converting them to Islam or by taking their lives. This particular *Bani* reveals the struggles experienced by the people which is why this period is called the "dark age". Guru Nanak was neither in favour of the caste system propagated by the Brahmanical society nor was he a supporter of the forced conversion

to Islam. His condemnation of rituals and the hypocrisy of the Brahmanical Faith have been highlighted in his verses. His idea was to promote a casteless society, with equality for both men and women. In this regard Sunita Puri highlights that:

Nanak's compositions bear eloquent testimony of his concern about social discrimination, economic exploitation, miscarriage of justice, evils of Brahminical domination, social decadence and many other evils of contemporary society. In passionate words he criticized the sloth of the Brahmins and their retrogressive and reactionary role which had led to an endless fragmentation of society. Guru Nanak was concerned with redemption of the human situation and made a sincere bid for changing what was dead and rotten.... The religion he founded was not to remain content with salvation of individual alone but aimed at the uplift of the society as well. (S. Puri, 138)

The works of Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah are prominently set in the background of rural Punjab. This rural setting and the rural occupations of the people give us a picture of Punjab of the early seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The beautiful farms or commonly known as the *khet*, the *bagicha* (gardens), the village houses, the *charkha* and the games played by the village girls form some of the prominent images of their works. Bulleh Shah in his verses has captured the games of the village girls, their dances, dress, the simple joys of rustic life and the pleasure they experience at the sight of the beloved. His verses depict images of the life led by the women of Punjab during his time period. In the poem "Weary of Spinning" *bhainaan main kattadee kattadee huttee* he provides us with a picture of a pastoral setting with a woman who is tired of working on the spinning wheel:

Sister! I have tired of spinning.  
My straw basket and my *phiri*  
Have been left behind in the backyard;  
In my hands has remained a pair of cotton rolls.  
In front of me is the spinning wheel,  
behind me is the low stool;  
and the thread has snapped in my hands. (Bulleh Shah, 408)



Waris Shah's *Heer* is admired for its rustic descriptions. The translator has tried hard to keep the essence of the rustic description as beautiful and close to that described by Waris Shah in the original text. As Ashwini Bhatnagar in the introduction to the epic, *Heer*, states:

The artist lived during those times and sang the song as it came to him naturally and spontaneously. His images, metaphors, and turns of phrases were the outcome of the years of living in his own environment and the 'feel' of the land was native to him. ...

Apart from the literary merit of the long narrative in verse, Waris Shah's *Heer* meticulously documents anthropological details of the era, its fauna and flora, its science and arts and its language and customs. It is verily a mine of information for scholars from different spheres of specialisations. (Dar, xi)

Many scholars of Punjabi Literature also believe that the *qissakars* used the principles of Sufism in their works so as to reveal the spiritual. They formulated the plots, characters and situations in the *qissas* to promote their idea of love for the divine. As S. R Sharda states,

The Sufi Kissa-writers have changed the plots in the way that these could present their ideology. The situations have been utilised to present their own thought and to criticize those of their rivals. The occasion of marriage has been utilized to condemn the Mullah, the representative of Shariat. The obstacles... have been utilised to prove the superiority of love over other methods. (Sharda, 202)

The writers of the legends gave an attractive persona to the protagonists and also to the places they inhabited. This beauty is regarded as the emanation of the divine, therefore the world which is a part of His creation is shown to be like a paradise.

There spring in many a shady bower  
Had made its charmed abode  
Beside cool streams and trees whose dower  
Of luscious fruit and fragrant flower  
Was generously bestowed.

...

With Takht Hazara in the vale

Of the Chenab, and everywhere  
 'Twas said that Takhtpur was indeed  
 A paradise upon the earth. (Dar, 1)

But when the sufferings fall on the two lovers there is a change in the description of nature. In *Heer* the town of the Kheras is dry and deserted, which symbolizes the loss of paradise.

The love depicted by the *Qissa-kars* is not a physical love which is based on carnal desires. But it is the pure love in which the hero protects the sanctity of the heroine. Love is the feeling of veneration and reverence one has in his/ her heart for the beloved. Love as an emotion is given the status of godliness. It is regarded as the purest form of worship and hence lovers give it a higher status than the status of the *Qazis*.

Love brother, cannot be matured  
 Until the lover lays his head  
 Upon its altar. Angels dread  
 And bow to love, why should not I? (Dar, 33)

As R. K. Kuldip points out:

....love is the crowning grace of humanity, the holiest light of the soul, the golden link which binds us to duty and truth, the redeeming principle that chiefly reconciles the heart of life, and is prophetic of eternal truth. It purifies the heart from self; it strengthens and ennoble the character, gives higher motives and a nobler aim to every action of life, and makes both man and woman strong, noble and courageous. (Kuldip, 12)

As mentioned above, love is one of the prominent elements to be found in the works of all the great poets taken for the present study. Here is a tabular presentation of the symbols of love used by each of them in the works with their corresponding meanings that the writers wanted to convey.

Table 5

Symbols of love and the meanings

<b>Symbols</b>	<b>Meaning as conveyed by the poets</b>			
	<b>Baba Farid</b>	<b>Guru Nanak Dev Ji</b>	<b>Bulleh Shah</b>	<b>Waris Shah</b>
<i>Mundh</i> or <i>dhan</i> or a woman whose husband is away	Soul pining for union with Lord	Soul pining for union with Lord	Soul pining for union with Lord. It may also symbolise the disciple waiting to be united with the master	Represented by Heer
King or Husband or Master or Farmer or Gardener	Supreme Lord	Supreme Lord	Supreme Lord or master	Represented by Ranjha
Death	The day of judgement or wedding day	Union with the true lord	Union with the true lord or wedding day	Union with the true lord or wedding day
Wedding Day	The day soul merges in the Lord	The day soul merges in the Lord	The day soul merges in the Lord	The day soul merges in the Lord. union of Heer-Ranjha
Heer and Ranjha	-	-	Soul and the Supreme Lord/ Disciple and the Master	Soul and the Supreme Lord/ Disciple and the Master
Takht Hazara	-	-	The throne or abode of the Lord	The throne or abode of the Lord
<i>Maya</i>	-	Illusions which lure the soul	Illusions which lure the soul	Illusions which lure the soul
<i>Qazi</i>	-	The one who blinds people with rituals	The one who blinds people with rituals	The one who blinds people with rituals
<i>Alif</i>	-	-	The letter of Love. It symbolizes the unity of God.	The letter of Love. It symbolizes the unity of God.
<i>Ka'ba</i>	-	-	Beloved or the Lord	Beloved or the Lord
<i>Fire</i>	Pangs of separation	Pangs of separation	Pangs of separation	Pangs of separation
<i>Jogi or Faqir</i>	-	-	The one who has renounced all his riches and family. A seeker on the spiritual	The one who has renounced all his riches and family. A seeker on the

			path	spiritual path
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An analysis of the metaphors, symbols and images that express the suggestive meaning is also very important. Spurgeon in his research divided his symbols into two major categories, these are, first the symbols taken from nature and the other taken from our day to day lives. The first group of symbols is governed by nature which includes the life of the countryside, change of seasons, rains, clouds, winds, flora and fauna, even the water bodies and also farming and the methods of farming are depicted as symbols.

The changing seasons provide a rich source of symbols especially with reference to the theme of love. The poets have used seasonal changes to depict the sufferings a soul undergoes on its path to the divine home. Baba Farid, he has referred to the different seasons in his *shalokas* and the *bani* in the *Raag Asa* of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. In his *shalokas*, Baba Farid has described the different mystical states through seasons. In his hymns in the *Raag Asa* he has depicted his observations on the changes that occur in the environment during these seasons. He states that as gradually everything changes with every passing month, in the same way human life is also not permanent and it is important for the soul to accept that only by remembering the Lord it can reach its home.

The swallows in the *Kartik*, the jungle-fire in the *Chaitra* and lightening in the month of *Shravan*,  
And the loving arms of the bride round her spouse (stay not for ever). (SGGS, 483)

Guru Nanak Dev Ji was the first to make use of the *Baramaha* to describe the pain of separation, yearning for union and eventually the union with the Almighty. Guru Sahab made use of the symbol of a lonely bride, who has been parted from her beloved, and who prays to be closer to him. With each passing month her agony of separation and the desperation to gain His

union increases in her heart. As the months pass she realizes that it is by the repetition of the Holy Name , the *Naam*, that her condition can be improved and the union can take place. Finally in the month of *Phaggan* she is able to gain the pleasure of her beloved's vision. Decked in gold as a newly wedded bride she is able to reach His court.

Each of the months depicts the outer jubilation of the environment and the inner strife of the soul of the bride. Her restlessness and impatience is quite prominent from the beginning of the *Baramaha*. Guru Nanak Dev Ji's *Baramaha* starts in the month of *Chet* or March and ends in *Phaggan* or February, hence Guru Sahab has captured the essence of the changes in the weather conditions and environment of each of the months in his composition and related it to the struggles of the soul on the spiritual path.

It (*Baramaha*) stands out in Sikh literature for its poetic splendour and philosophical import. All the twelve months are important for it is in them that the interaction of the Timeless with time takes place – the young bride remaining in the quest of her Timeless beloved. (Singha, 31)

Bulleh Shah's *Baramaha* narrates the story of his being separated from his master Shah Inayat. The troubles and tribulations he underwent to win back his love and shelter are recounted in his *Baramaha*. He has also made use of the imagery of the lost bride separated from her beloved and who prays for the union with her Lord. She spends sleepless nights writhing in her bed just to be united with her beloved. Her pain increases even more when she sees the village girls enjoying the beautiful spring weather in *bisakh* while she is distressed as her Beloved is nowhere to be found.

When the rich one brings home the riches,  
Then I, too, can talk like the ones  
Who have their spouses with them.  
Mighty is their power who have their spouses with them.  
Now, pining away I have become lifeless.  
Without the Beloved I have unbearable pain in my heart, says Bullah.

I have no one else; it is He who has made me pine and melt. (Bulleh Shah, 449)

While the seasonal cycle in Guru Sahab's poem begins in the month of *Chet* and ends in *Phaggan*, Bulleh Shah's starts in *Assu* and ends in *Bhadun*. Guru Sahab depicts the separated bride as the soul which yearns for the Lord and Bulleh Shah makes use of the imagery of the separated bride to show his separation from his master Shah Inayat. Both Guru Sahab and Bulleh Shah have narrated the experiences on the path to spiritual awakening, hence there is a personal element to be noticed in both of these poems. Though there are a number of differences in their descriptions of the months and also in the experiences of the bride but both the seasonal cycles lead to the union of the bride with her beloved.

A "Song of Twelve Months" has also been included by Waris Shah in his love legend of *Heer*. It is a sad composition, which depicts the time Heer spends in the household of the Kheras. It begins in a pensive tone, in the month of *sawan* and ends in *har*. Waris Shah's *Baramaha* narrates the change of months and seasons but Heer is engulfed in the grief of being separated from Ranjha. The joyful village girls make her feel worse and as each month passes, her condition deteriorates.

Here is tabular presentation of the descriptions of the months given by these four poets in their respective works:

Table 6

Description of the Months of *Baramaha*

<b>Month</b>	<b>Baba Farid</b>	<b>Guru Nanak Dev Ji</b>	<b>Bulleh Shah</b>	<b>Waris Shah</b>
Chet or Chaitra	"Jungle-fire"- <i>ddo</i> – reflecting the heat of the month	First month of <i>Baramaha</i> . The nature is blooming, bumble bee singing but bride is withering in separation	Seventh month of <i>Baramaha</i> Cuckoo birds cooing, the forests flourish but the lover is dying in grief.	Ninth month of <i>Baramaha</i> . The girls decorate themselves but the Heer is love-less and misses the presence of Ranjha.

Vaisakh	-	The nature is green and lush. This month is famous for commerce and business but the bride seeks help to meet her beloved.	The people are getting rich as the markets are full of goods. But the lover is pining for the beloved.	Sad and melancholic Heer doesn't feel warmth. In sleep and wakefulness she cries for the love and union with Ranjha.
Jeyshta	-	Because of the scorching heat and the winds everybody has gone inside their homes. Likewise the bride has taken to silence and contemplates on the virtues of the Beloved.	The fire of separation engulfs the lover who is worried when the beloved will come to him.	Heer feels "unloved, ungladdened and unsafe." The separation like the "flaming torch" surrounds her. She wails at nights but she prays that she may be united to Ranjha.
Asarh	-	The whole earth suffers in the heat of the sun, the earth wails and so do the crickets.. The bride shares the sorrow of the earth and seeks <i>chhaia</i> (shade) to gain union.	The lover feels attuned with the season of <i>harh</i> . As the earth burns so does the heart of the lover.	Heer compares herself to other women of the village who live in happiness and mirth with their spouses but she suffers the pain of separation.
Shravan	The season of lightening.	The first rains are able to quench the heat of the earth but the bride wails for the beloved.	For Bulleh Shah the month of <i>Sawan</i> is the one of solace. The whole earth enjoys the rains. And so the lover is joyful at the union with his Beloved.	Waris Shah's <i>Baramaha</i> begins in <i>Sawan</i> . The sorrow is heightened as Heer misses Ranjha.
Bhadon	-	In this month the water flows and the whole earth is pulsating with energy. Both animate and inanimate objects enjoy the rains and the bride though in deep sorrow of separation finds peace in the fact that the whole earth is full with His Grace.	The lover is joyful that the Beloved has come to him and is jubilant to have experienced the nectar of his love.	The rains in the forest are the same as the rain of tears which flow through Heer's eyes.

Asuj	-	The month of realisation of the bride. She has not experienced the union with the lord yet and through her introspection she tries to analyse her shortcomings.	This month marks the beginnings of the <i>Baramaha</i> of Bulleh Shah. The condition of the lover is sorrowful as his pangs of separation are intense.	Heer is distressed in this month and she tries to convince herself that by praying to God her condition can be made better.
Kartik	The birds singing	The bride lights the lamp of enlightenment in her heart with the wick of love so that by remembering the Lord she is able to get the vision.	The environment is torturous to the inner turmoil of the lover.	As the seasons change Heer pines for Ranjha.
Magghar	-	In this season we see that the bride enjoys the the time spent with the <i>Sadhsangat</i> .	Bulleh Shah confides that in this month he has realized that only by going inwards he can reach his beloved.	In this month Heer misses the “cherub” face of Ranjha and abides by the faith in the Lord.
Poh	-	The frosty month of <i>Poh</i> destroys all the vegetation but with the inner warmth of the vision she is able to feel at ease.	Bulleh Shah points out his condition that even the cold of the month is not able to calm his pangs of separation.	In this chilly weather Heer pines for the union with Ranjha.
Magh	-	The charity and worship provides her solace and by meditating she is able to relish the vision of the Lord.	He points out that even the holy baths and going to the pilgrimage doesn't give the experience of the joy of union.	Heer reflects that even if she tries to paint her face, the love-sick mind doesn't let her see beauty of this world.
Phalgun	-	It is the blissful month as all duality has vanished.	Bulleh Shah brings out the contrast of the springtime to the deserted heart which cries for the Lord.	The condition of Heer is opposite to the “frolicsome and gay” weather of the month.



Other forms of folk literature which depict the impact of the change of seasons on human life show a certain development or a journey which is symbolically represented by the cyclic movement of the seasons. Sir James George Frazer, a Scottish Anthropologist, in his renowned work *The Golden Bough* has observed the impact the seasons on the ideology of artist across various cultures of the world. He states:

The properties of drugs and minerals, the causes of rain and drought, of thunder and lightning, the changes of the seasons, the phases of the moon, the daily and yearly journeys of the sun, the motions of the stars, the mystery of life, and the mystery of death, all these things must have excited the wonder of these early philosophers, and stimulated them to find solutions of problems that were doubtless often thrust on their attention in the most practical form by the importunate demands of their clients, who expected them not merely to understand but to regulate the great processes of nature for the good of man. (Frazer, 63b)

Symbols of sunrise, dawn, rain, clouds, flashes of lightening all form an integral part of ancient poetry. As pointed out by Dr. Gopal Singh in the introduction of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*:

The poetry of the Granth sings in symbols. But, the metaphor of the Granth is homely and direct, such as one would come across in the daily run of one's life. And yet, the word, sound and idea pictures, in which the poetry of the Granth abounds, create such a perfect atmosphere of harmony between the subject matter and its form. (G. Singh, XIX)

Guru Nanak Dev Ji has made an extensive use of the symbols of gardening and farming so as to depict the right way of living. He states that like the efforts put in by a farmer in order to provide a good harvest in the same way if a man tries to calm his mind and sow in it the Name of the Lord it is then only that his life would be worth living.

Let thy Mind be the farmer, Good Deeds the farming and thy body the farm:  
And let Effort (in the way of God) irrigate thy farm.  
Let the Lord's Name be the seed, and Contentment the furrowing, and let the fence be of Humility.

And if thou dost Deeds of Love, thy Seed will sprout and Fortunate will then be of Humility. (SGGS, 577)

The symbols that recur in almost all the works of these writers are those that symbolize love. A yearning bride, the corrupt *qazis* and *mullahs*, the relationship of a master and disciple and also the Holy Name, are some of the common symbols in the works of all the four artists. The familial relationships or attachments are projected as distraction or hindrances on the spiritual path and these lead to the downfall of man. The five senses have been termed as the “five evils” which lure man from the path of spirituality. These poets also highlight the hypocrisy in following empty rituals.

Symbols of dancing, *charkha* or spinning wheel, flute are used in the *kafis* of Bulleh Shah to depict the feeling of ecstasy, the efforts put in on the spiritual path and being true to one’s master, respectively.

Your love has made me dance to fast beat!  
 Your love has taken abode within my heart!  
 This cup of poison I drank all by myself.  
 Come, soon, O Physician, or else I shall breathe my last!  
 Your love has made me dance to a fast beat! (Bulleh Shah, 184)

(The symbol of dance has been used to denote the feeling of ecstasy that prevails in the heart once the eyes have seen the vision of His abode.)

Light the lamp near you;  
 Spin the cotton. Put it in the baskets;  
 Keep awake throughout the night,  
 And work tirelessly on your wheel, O girl!  
 Put your mind in spinning, O girl! (Bulleh Shah, 371)

(In the above lines the spinning wheel or *charkha* is used for the practice of meditation. Bulleh Shah states that while working on the spinning wheel one has to concentrate completely on spinning, likewise while meditating a person should concentrate continuously on the repetition of the Holy Name.)

Wondrous music does Lord play on the flute!  
 O, Lord of the flute, cowherd Ranjha,  
 You are in tune with the whole world,  
 You rejoice, but I am in dire misery.  
 Pray, harmonize my tune with Yours;  
 Wondrous music does the Lord play on the flute! (Bulleh Shah, 292-293)

(The flute here is used for the disciple, Ranjha is used for the master and the stanza is prayer to the master to take the disciple in his shelter and help him “harmonize” with the Supreme Lord.)

Table 7

The List of Common Symbols

<i>Common Symbols</i>	<i>Their common meaning and usage</i>
God	The infinite one
Man	The mind or ego
Boat man	The one who ferries across the boat of life, Master
Cage	Human body
Knowledge	Spiritual knowledge
Repetition of the Name of the Lord	Remembering the Lord
Ladder	Way to reach god’s abode
Mind’s eye	Which keeps away all evil
<i>Jot</i> or light	Illuminates the darkness of the mind
Sword	Cuts off all the evil
Philosopher’s stone	Transforms the gross mind
Swan	Holy person

Navtej Sarna points out, “The concept of Guru finds frequent mention in the Sikh scriptures. The Guru acts as a guide who places the seeker on the right path to salvation, but the disciple should walk the hard way himself.” (Sarna, 126) The Master-disciple relationship forms the core of the present works chosen for the study. The poets believed that for the realization of the Lord it is important for the disciple to have the guidance of a learned and an experienced guide. The master who has realized the God and has been able to come across the vision of the Divine can only help the ignorant and innocent disciple to experience the divinity in him. The very idea that the soul is an emanation of God and is a part of the Divine, is realized only when the master enlightens the disciple towards this truth. Baba Farid emphasises this in his verses. He highlights that the disciple should follow the path the Guru shows. Instead of

wasting one's life pursuing false objects one should work towards righteousness. For Guru Sahab, Guru is the boatmen who will help the seeker sail across this sea of life.

For Bulleh Shah, his master is everything. The master is "as indispensable for a seeker to attain God-realization as is a living husband necessary for a woman in order to bear children." (Bulleh Shah, 110) His verses are full of love, adoration and gratitude for his master. Bulleh Shah writes:

My guide taught me a lesson'  
No stranger has admittance there.  
He showed me beauty of the Absolute Essence.  
And a tumult of unity overwhelmed me!  
Who can now recognize me?  
Now I have become a different being. (Bulleh Shah, 101)

The symbols of Heer and Ranjha, as has been stated earlier, were particularly used by the Sufi writers to show the master disciple relationship. The epic *Heer* is basically a symbolical reflection on the phases which a disciple undergoes when he comes in contact with the master. Their relationship and the sufferings they undergo have been related to the kind of feeling a disciple also undergoes when confusion envelops him on the spiritual path. The moment the two, Heer and Ranjha are together is recorded as a time of ecstasy.

The works included in the present study are remarkable works in translation. Dr. Gopal Singh who took an enormous task of translating the entire *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in English. As Mrs. Pearl S. Buck mentions,

For the western reader these are invaluable, providing the background and framework for the text.... We are accustomed to ancient texts embroidered with esoteric references, remote from our daily life, but here is a text which might have been written by any one of similar insight and experience. For this freshness and directness, this combination of profundity with simplicity, I am sure we owe much to the translator. He writes with a style of a poet, his English

is faultless, and he has the spirit and intelligence necessary for so great a task. In short, he has done a superb piece of work. (G. Singh, XIV)

The language used in the translations of these great works is easy to understand. The translator has also kept the sequence of the *Raags* and the hymns the same as the original so that there isn't any discrepancy in the reading of the English text. Some of the *Gurumukhi* have been transliterated into English, meanings of which have been at the bottom of every page of the Holy *Granth* so that a non- *Gurumukhi* reader may also understand the text properly.

The translators of Bulleh Shah's poetic works J. R. Puri and T. P. Shangari have analysed and worked on the poems of Bulleh Shah after a thorough knowledge of the form and language of the original texts. In its Punjabi version Bulleh Shah's *kafis* have been popular since their advent. The older Sufis saw a reflection of godliness in his poetic works whereas the younger generation finds solace in the musical compositions of Bulleh Shah's *kafis*. The translations have succeeded in imparting the crux of the message of Bulleh Shah's poetic works.

After a number of corrections and alterations the translated copy of *Heer* was published posthumously. Though the epic has been translated before in the form of story entitled "The Adventures of Hir and Ranjha" but it was Dar's translation which was first in the form closest to the original.

Music and melody form an important component of poetry. Most of these poems are meant to be sung. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* has been divided into thirty- one *Ragas*. Each *raga* conveys a particular emotion or feeling which is unique to the *raga* only. The metrical form of the verses is put into definite notes of music indicated by the Sikh Gurus. The metre is defined by the *ghar* (beats) which are exclusive to that *raga*. The combination of *raga* and *ghar* (beat) for every *Shabad* implies that the Gurus had a definite motive behind deciding on a particular

form. This framework was not set to limit the ability of the human mind to experiment with music but to act as an aid to spiritual development. Poetry (the form in which *Gurbani* is written) and music (*ragas*) harmonize with each other. Music versifies and provides melody, uniformity and cadence to poetry. The factor which binds the music and poetry is their metrical-form (*ghar* or beat). Music (*Raga*) is based on sound (*swar* - notes) and a combination of notes produce distinct musical effects. Poetry is determined by Word (*Shabad*), which communicates a message. Music (*Raga*) on the other hand conveys a feeling to the heart and is therefore universal. When poetry is complemented with *raga* (music) and bound by *ghar* (beat), the resulting effect can be of a deeply moving spiritual experience. The *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* opens with the *Mool Mantra* and is further continued by the *Japji Sahib*. The next composition is divided into two parts of *So Dar* and *So Purkh* which contains the *Banis* of the *Nitnem*. The major part of the Holy Scripture comes after the fourteen pages of the above mentioned section. The thirty one *ragas* that follow are in the following sequence in the Holy *Granth*:

Table 8

Sequence, Page no. and Size of the *Ragas* in the Holy *Granth*

<b><i>Raga Name</i></b>	<b><i>Page No.</i></b>	<b><i>No. Of Compositions</i></b>	<b><i>Raga Name</i></b>	<b><i>Page No.</i></b>	<b><i>No. Of Compositions</i></b>
<i>Sri Raga</i>	14 to 93	200	<i>Raga Gaund</i>	859 to 875	49
<i>Raga Majh</i>	94 to 150	119, no <i>Bhagat Bani</i> in this <i>Raga</i>	<i>Raga Ramkali</i>	876 to 974	135
<i>Raga Gauri</i>	151 to 346	393	<i>Raga Nat Narayan</i>	975 to 983	25
<i>Raga Asa</i>	347 to 488	365	<i>Raga Mali Gaura</i>	984 to 988	17
<i>Raga Gujari</i>	489 to 526	67	<i>Raga Maru</i>	889 to 1106	160
<i>Raga Devagandhari</i>	527 to 536	47, no <i>Bhagat Bani</i> in this <i>Raga</i>	<i>Raga Tukhari</i>	1107 to 1117	11, no <i>Bhagat Bani</i> in this <i>Raga</i>
<i>Raga Bihagara</i>	537 to 556	18, no <i>Bhagat Bani</i> in this <i>Raga</i>	<i>Raga Kedara</i>	1118 to 1124	25
<i>Raga Wadhans</i>	557 to 594	no <i>Bhagat Bani</i> in this <i>Raga</i>	<i>Raga Bhairon</i>	1125 to 1167	132

<i>Raga Sorath</i>	595 to 659	34	<i>Raga Basant</i>	1168 to 1196	87
<i>Raga Dhanasari</i>	660 to 695	115	<i>Raga Sarang</i>	1197 to 1253	177
<i>Raga Jaitsari</i>	696 to 710	32	<i>Raga Malar</i>	1254 to 1293	76
<i>Raga Todi</i>	711 to 718	35	<i>Raga Kanara</i>	1294 to 1318	71
<i>Raga Bairari</i>	719 to 720	7, no <i>Bhagat Bani</i> in this <i>Raga</i>	<i>Raga Kalyan</i>	1319 to 1326	23
<i>Raga Tilang</i>	721 to 727	20	<i>Raga Parbhatti</i>	1327 to 1351	67
<i>Raga Suhi</i>	728 to 794	41	<i>Raga Jaijavanti</i>	1352 to 1353	4
<i>Raga Bilaval</i>	795 to 858	190			

Professor Gurinder Singh Mann, in his detailed study of the *ragas* in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* has very distinctly interpreted the division of the *ragas* and the order in which they are arranged in the Holy *Granth*. The thirty one *ragas* of the Holy *Granth* are divided into six seasons of the year, which are: winter, spring, summer, rains, autumn and early winter. The *ragas* are also time specific, that is, they are to be sung at a particular time of the day. The day is divided into eight *pahirs* (an Indian unit of time equals to three hours), one *raga* is allotted on to each one of them. (Mann, 89) The *ragas* in the Holy *Granth* have also been further divided into sections and these sections are titled “*Raag Ramkali Mahala 1*”. The *Mahala* and the number mentioned after it provide us with information about the authorship of the *Raga*, the number tells of the Guru Sahab who wrote the section. As has been mentioned above, the *Raga Ramkali Mahala 1* is the section written by Guru Nanak in the *Raag Ramkali*. Each *Raga* ends with the *bani* or the *shabads* of the Holy saints. These hymns are then defined by the name of the saints mentioned in the *raag*, for example, “*Raag Jaijavanti Shaloka Sheikh Farid Ji ke*” informs us about the *shalokas* of Sheikh Farid in the *Raag Jaijavanti* of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Each *raga* begins with an invocation to the Supreme Father and then the hymns of the Gurus follow under each subsection of the *raga*. Within each section of the *ragas* the compositions are

arranged in the following order, the *shabads* followed by the *ashtapadis* (eight lined stanzas), then the *chhants*, *shalokas* followed by the compositions of the *Bhagats*.

The *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* contains the verses of fifteen medieval Indian poets of *Sant*, Sufi and *bhakti* origin. These hymns were included as they bore likeness to the mystical experiences of the Sikh Gurus. Even though there is a diversity of language and culture but the message of spiritual upliftment and criticism of the *Brahminical* rituals bring these hymns close to the message conveyed by the Sikh gurus. Pashuara Singh writes,

The hymns of the Bhagats bear testimony to their highly critical attitude towards brahminical rituals. Since Sikh doctrine also stood against much of brahminism of the day, it was natural for the compiler to incorporate in the scripture some representative works of the Bhagats of the time. Second, since different groups used the Bhagat Bani for their sectarian ends, it was edited and included in the scripture to preserve it in its original form. Third, the Sikh scripture includes the compositions of those Bhagats who evolved their philosophy of spiritual development on the basis of their personal mystic experience. The ‘common core’ of their immediate mystical experiences is expressed through a diversity of linguistic expressions couched in regional dialects, myths, metaphors, symbols and other folk genres. (P. Singh, 3)

Baba Farid’s verses in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* are found in three different sections of the Holy *Granth*. As has been stated before, these verses are the only surviving works of Baba Farid. The essence of the hymns can be stated as follows:

- One should never forget about Death under any circumstances.
- One should avoid quarrelling and ranting on petty things.
- One should follow the path of non-violence to lead a peaceful life.

As his hymns fall in three different sections of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, these hymns can be understood in every *Raga* as:



Table 9

The Essence of the Verses of Baba Farid present in different *Ragas*

<i>Raga</i>	<i>Essence of the verses</i>
<i>Raga Asa</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have true love for the Lord</li> <li>• Not to be pretentious on the path of enlightenment</li> <li>• To work hard for enlightenment</li> </ul>
<i>Raga Suhi</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The anguish of separation</li> <li>• Life gets wasted if one doesn't remember his Lord. And when death falls it is too late</li> </ul>
<i>Raga Jaijavanti</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realisation that death will fall sooner or later</li> <li>• The torment of wasting the time of youth in mundane works of life</li> <li>• To live a humble life</li> </ul>

There are around 974 hymns of Guru Nanak Dev Ji under nineteen different *ragas* of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. These hymns are in the form of a number of *ashtapadis*<sup>1</sup>, *chhands*<sup>2</sup>, *vaars*<sup>3</sup>, *chaupadas*<sup>4</sup> and longer verses like the *Japji Sahib*, *Asa di Var*, *Patti Likhi*, *Dakhni Onkar*, *Sohila* and *Barah Maha* which form the core of his philosophy. Guru Sahab's philosophy and teachings can be summarized as:

- There is only one God, who is known by different names in different religions.
- Strive hard and make a whole hearted effort to help others, because service to mankind is the biggest service to God.
- Follow the path of honesty.
- In the eyes of God, all are equal, irrespective of the caste, age, creed or sex.
- Be compassionate towards all living beings.
- Lead a simple life.

<sup>1</sup> *Ashtapadi*: These are hymns which have eight lines (steps) within each composition.

<sup>2</sup> *Chhands*: These are verses of praise. The length of a chhant can range from a lengthy *Shabad* of four to six verses or even of one or two lines. They have their own unique musical style and arrangement of words.

<sup>3</sup> *Vaars*: These are a group of *Pauris* and *shalokas* arranged to sing of the praises of the Lord.

<sup>4</sup> *Chaupadas*: The hymns which have four verses in them.

- Not to be scared of anything and just continue performing good deeds.

The feelings conveyed through the hymns in every *Raga* are discussed in the table below

Table 10

The Dominating Feelings of the *Raga*

<i>Raga Name</i>	<i>Feelings Conveyed</i>
<i>Japji</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of following the ways of the Lord</li> <li>• To understand the <i>Hukam</i> of the Lord</li> <li>• Ways to reach the ultimate home of the Lord</li> </ul>
<i>Sri Raag</i>	Maya and detachment
<i>Raga Majh</i>	Yearning to merge with lord, Giving up negative values
<i>Raga Gauri</i>	Principled life, seriousness on the path of Lord, calm and composed nature
<i>Raga Asa</i>	Hope
<i>Raga Gujri</i>	Prayer of the Lord
<i>Raga Vadhans</i>	Vairaag (Detachment)
<i>Raga Sorath</i>	Praise of the Lord
<i>Raga Tilang</i>	Sadness of separation
<i>Raga Suhi</i>	Being away from the home of the Lord a feeling of sadness in the soul.
<i>Raga Bilawal</i>	Beautification of the soul, a feeling of happiness
<i>Raga Ramkali</i>	To give up the life of a wandering Jogi
<i>Raga Maru</i>	Bravery, fight against evil
<i>Raga Tukhari</i>	Separation and union with Lord
<i>Raga Bhairo</i>	Man's state in hell
<i>Raga Basant</i>	Happiness
<i>Raga Sarang</i>	Thirst to meet God
<i>Raga Malaar</i>	State of separated and united soul
<i>Raga Parbhatti</i>	Bhakti (Devotion of Lord)

Bulleh Shah's compositions have been regarded as the "pinnacle of Sufi Literature in India". His compositions are popular even today with scholars and lovelorn youngsters. The poetic verses have a romantic appeal which is able to attract the attention of many. Even today his compositions are set to music that can move the listeners. The compositions of Bulleh Shah that have been included in our present study have been taken from the *Mystic of East Series* published by the Radha Soami Satsang, Beas under the title *Bulleh Shah*. These include around 138 *Kafis*, a composition of *Baramaha* containing verses for each month of the year which are

twelve in number. A composition of *Atthvara* contains a verse for each day of the week and these are eight in number. There are also some miscellaneous short verses under the titles of *Gandhan*, *Dohre* and *Siharfi*.

In a *Kafi* the first or the second line or even at times both lines together act as a refrain. It is mostly chanted like a song and this type of writing is also used by *qawwals* to pour out their feelings in a congregation or gathering. The first and second lines of the poems of Bulleh Shah are mostly repeated after every stanza when sung. The *Baramaha* which was one of the popular forms of writing of folk literature has also been used by Bulleh Shah to write about human emotions with nature as the background. The months hence form the milieu for the human emotions. The *Atthvara* makes use of the days of the week to show the variety of emotions and on Friday (which is regarded as a blessed day by the Muslims) the soul finds solace in the realization of the Lord. *Gandhan* or the knots is based on the forty days that a bride undergoes before marriage in waiting for her groom. During this time she pines for the groom and ties a band on her wrist which has forty knots on it. She unties it with every passing day and on the last day that is the day of her wedding she unfastens the last knot and becomes one with the spouse.

She who is in love with the Spouse  
becomes the Spouse herself.  
She leaves her sense and reason behind  
to go away with the Spouse. (Bulleh Shah, 462)

Bulleh Shah's verses largely revolve around the theme of love. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, love has a number of shades in the verses of Bulleh Shah. His verses depict a gradual growth from the innocence of being in love to the pain of separation and as the lover suffers from the state of *viraag* he puts in efforts to be reunited to his beloved.

Waris Shah's *Heer*, is written in epic style, and hence the poet has tried to follow the norms of an epic. As for the invocation of the muse, the poet, Waris Shah has prayed to *Takht Hazara*, which is regarded as the abode of the Lord. The poem is also held in high esteem by lovers from all over the world for they believe that if they read the poem they gain blessings from the lovers. The epic is divided into six cantos. Each canto is given its own title which helps in the understanding of the development of the plot. As the epic tells the tragic story of the young lovers Heer and Ranjha the title of each canto is also symbolic of their journey on the path of love. The cantos are titled as:

Canto One: Love

Canto Two: Marriage and Reclusion

Canto Three: Marriage and Reclusion

Canto Four: Pursuit

Canto Five: Fulfilment

Canto Six: Disillusionment

Each canto is divided into a number of sections. Waris Shah in his original text has made use of the classical *dohara* metre. The metre was made of varying sections each having a rhymed couplet. The rhythm was a rising one so as to depict the wail and cries of the human heart. In his translation of a text like *Heer*, S. N. Dar has tried hard to keep the metre close the original. An end rhyme has been given to each of the couplets and the verses beautifully depict the human emotions of sadness and depression in them.

The artistry of the works of these four poets provides us with a deep spiritual understanding of these poets. The thematic analysis, the symbols used and also the metre of the verses depict the power of their vision. Though the four poets fall in different time periods but it is their mystic experiences and expressions that bring them all together. Therefore, in an expansive study of Punjabi Poetry it can be said that the four poets are the four pillars on which the very foundation of mystical Punjabi Poetry rests.

## **Chapter VI:**

### **Conclusion**

In her preface to the twelfth edition of the book *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness* Evelyn Underhill defines mysticism as, "... I understand it (Mysticism) to be the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the transcendental order, whatever be the theological formula under which that order is understood." (Underhill, xv) As also highlighted by Balwant Singh Anand, "It (mysticism) is born of the universal craving of the human spirit for personal communion with the Ultimate Reality." (Anand, 1) This process which the mystics term as "union" is actually the feeling of unity that the soul experiences with the Almighty, referred to as "transcendental order" in the definition. The essence converges to the idea that mysticism is the journey of the soul from the physical to the metaphysical, from the material to the spiritual.

In an interview to the *la Republica* published by the *National Catholic Register* (*America's Most Complete Catholic News Source*) Pope Francis shared his mystical experience which he had had just before accepting the role of a bishop. The article titled "Pope Reveals Mystical Experience In Major New Interview" states that when asked if he was a mystic, the Pope smiled and said "What Do you think?" He then added,

"Before the acceptance, I asked to be able to retire for some minutes in the room next to that with the balcony on the square," he said. "My head was completely empty, and a great anxiety invaded me." "To make it pass and to relax, I closed my eyes and every thought disappeared," ...did not feel any more "anxiety or emotion," but that, at "a certain point, a great light invaded me; it lasted for a second, but it seemed really long."

"Then the light dissipated, and I stood straight up and headed to the room where the cardinals were waiting for me and the table on which rested the act of acceptance," he said. "I signed it... and then on the balcony came the '*Habemus Papam!*'" (National.Catholic.Register, Web)

As quoted earlier William James said that a mystical experience has a noetic quality. It is a very personal experience which is also transient and makes the person passive for some time.

Poetry is one of the mediums through which a mystic shares his experience, others being painting, music or even dancing. Mystic poetry is rich in symbols. MH Abrams defines symbol as, "'symbol' is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or has a range of reference, beyond itself." (Abrams, PDF File) Charles Chadwick in his analysis divided symbols into the two categories of human and transcendental symbols. Human symbols reflect personal experiences and they are the expressions and objects the poets use to convey their inner feelings. Transcendental symbols represent the ideal world of which the human world is an imperfect reflection.

With the advent of Sufi and *Bhakti* movements on the Indian sub-continent, the experiences of the divine were seen in the lives of a number of devout men and women. The beginnings of Sufism in India are linked to the advent of Islam on the Indian soil. With the establishment of the Ghaznavi Empire in 998 A.D. a number of Turkish and Afghani expeditions took place. Sufism, as a mystic movement, enlightened the people with the message that with inner purity and intuition one can gain an experience of the Divinity within. The Sufis though they adhered to the teachings of the *Quran*, were against the rituals of the Brahmanical Hindu society of India and also the caste system that prevailed at the time. The *Bhakti* Movement had started in the South but being a mass movement it influenced a number of scholars and spread to the North by the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. The *Bhakti* Movement gave prominence to devotion and love for the Lord as with these, the spiritual awakening in a person can take place. The *Bhakti* saints preached that by loving the divine one could experience His Grace. They were also against the caste system that was prominent in medieval India. They believed that all men are equal and are born with the same spark of Divinity, which can be awakened only when they show real love for the Lord.

Punjab became the centre of all the religious activities from the time the Muslims had invaded India. Sufism had started to grow simultaneously with the establishment of Islam on the Indian sub-continent. As the *Bhakti* Movement reached North India it helped in the formulation of the ideologies of the *Bhakti* saints like Kabir Das, Guru Nanak Dev and others. Guru Nanak Dev took the best of both the movements and wove them into one to lay the foundation of the Sikh- *panth*. Having converged in Punjab, the *Bhakti* and Sufi movements influenced one another. As stated by Sunita Puri, “Mutual contact, reaction and reconciliation between Hindu and Muslim traditions were thus noteworthy phenomena of the religious climate of contemporary Punjab.” (Puri, 3)

Punjabi Literature which began with the writings of Baba Farid reflected the Punjab of medieval times and the mystical experiences of these early saint poets. Medieval Punjabi poetry is essentially the result of the mystic experiences of the poet saints of both the Sufi and *Bhakti* movements. The works of the four poets can be divided into three time periods. These are:

- **Pre-Nanak Age** – approximately from ninth to fifteenth century (Baba Farid)
- **the Age of Guru Nanak Dev** - 1469-1708 (along with the Sufi; *Bhakti* Movement also evolved in this period) (Guru Nanak Dev and Bulleh Shah)
- ***Qissa* Poetry** - 1709-1799. (Waris Shah)

The four selected poets belonging to the above mentioned periods reflect strong Sufi mystic thought. These poets gave a prominent position to the master or spiritual guide or precept who reveals the hidden secret of the spiritual path. The Guru or the *pir* is believed to be the One who makes the disciple reach his spiritual goal. Guru Sahab calls the master a boatman who helps the disciple cross this sea of life. For Bulleh Shah, the master is the beloved in whose company the disciple is ‘forever joyed’. And in *Heer*, the journey of Heer is incomplete without Ranjha, as they both symbolise the master-disciple relationship. In *Heer*, the strength to walk on the path of love comes from the faith in Ranjha.

The four poets converge to the idea that the Name of the Lord is the pinnacle of spiritual understanding and once the pleasure of repeating the Holy Name of the Lord is experienced by the disciple, then the spiritual upliftment takes place in him. Guru Sahab in his teachings gave supremacy to the Holy Name of the Lord. He said the Name is the panacea and one reaches the highest order of living by being completely engrossed in the Holy Name. Bulleh Shah uses the symbol of “spinning wheel” to assert that by meditation and repetition of the Name one can attune himself to the Lord. They were all against the hypocrisy of external, social rituals which hinder the path of spiritual growth. Guru Nanak calls rituals “chains of mind”. Bulleh Shah and Baba Farid condemn the religious men who make a false prattle of their knowledge. In *Heer*, even Heer stands against the rules and regulations of the village *qazis*.

In the course of the time period taken for the present study, the Sufi thought underwent a marked change though the scholars don't have a very clear idea about what actually caused this change. Some hold the view that due to the advent of *Bhakti* Movement on the Indian soil the ideas of the later Sufi poets were influenced by it and love became a prominent emotion in their works. Baba Farid was a pioneer of early *Ijadist* Sufism and his works mark the beginning of Punjabi Literature. In his writings, Baba Farid conveys the strict code which should be followed by a true Muslim. The one who has the knowledge of *Sharia't* and wakes up early to worship at the *ka'ba* is regarded as a true Muslim. In his verses he states that the knowledge of religion is a prerequisite for spiritual knowledge. His verses also highlight the following ideas:

- The path of righteousness,
- The idea of the cultivation of moral and ethical values,
- The notion of leading a life of poverty (*faqr*) and resignation (*tawakkul*),
- The virtues of humility, forgiveness and sweetness of tongue,
- Love for the Almighty is a prerequisite for the spiritual journey
- Love and respect for *Pir* or the Master, who guides one on the spiritual path, and
- Fear of Death



Baba Farid stated in his verses that it is according to his good or evil deeds that a man is tested in the court of God. He therefore emphasises the need to perform good deeds and adhere to the commandments of the *Quran*. He writes:

The Share of Death is like the eroded river-bank:  
And beyond it, the fire of Hell burns strong, and men cry and wail.  
Some have known this, while others, being Careless, mind it not.  
But the Deeds one does in the world alone stand as a witness unto our life in the  
Yond! [98] (SGGS, 1314)

There is also seriousness and urgency of tone in the verses of Baba Farid. This is because in many of his poems there is a warning about dire consequences if one dies without any spiritual awakening. If death falls then the soul will be trapped in the bridge of hell and hell itself.

The later Sufis like Bulleh Shah, Sultan Bahu, etc. did not support the idea of worshipping the Lord at temples or mosques for they believed that He is present within. Bulleh Shah writes:

Within us abides our Murshid.  
When I fell in love, I learnt this,  
My logic, my grammar, my polemics,  
All my knowledge was useless.  
What has He to do with prayers, with fasts,  
The one who is intoxicated with the wine of love?  
The erudition of the pundits,  
And the scholarship of mullahs proved futile.  
None of them know the secret. (Bulleh Shah, 282)

Bulleh Shah believed in the unity of man and God. In his verses he states that when man gives up his ego it is then that the realization of God dawns on him. The later Sufis believed that God is transcendental, He is present in each and every particle of the universe. They believed that God exists in everything and everyone and vice versa. The grace of God according to them falls on everybody, even the sinful. Hence they had a pantheistic approach towards the existence of the Godhead. Bulleh Shah writes:

O, wonderful are the guises You wear!  
 Now, from whom do You hide Yourself?  
 Bullah has now rightly come to know You;  
 In every form he finds You out.  
 Somewhere You come, somewhere You go.  
 He can never fail to recognize You. (Bulleh Shah, 423)

While a development of thought can be traced from the poetry of the *Ijadist* to the later Sufis of Punjab, the works of the Sikh Gurus in this middle period form the link between the two forms of Sufism. Guru Nanak's poetry is devotional in nature. His philosophy and religious message is passed on through his songs and hymns. Fear of the Lord is important as it only helps in paving the path of love for the Lord. The *Japji Sahib* is also considered to be a step-by-step guide to the spiritual understanding of man. The *Sidh Gosht* depicts his discussions with Hindu saints in which he stresses on the importance of abiding by the Name of the Lord, being a *gurmukh* and not following evil means in life. He also states that ego stands as a hindrance on the spiritual path. Hence by meditating and surrendering to the Lord the ego is silenced. *Maya* is also regarded as the net which blinds the disciple. By abiding by the Name the disciple can free himself from the clutches of *maya*. In the *Dakhni Oankar* he states that the Master helps the disciple on the spiritual path and therefore the disciple overcomes all the difficulties once he is guided by a Guru. He was also against the practice of *Hatha Yoga* and suggests his followers to earnestly follow the way of *Sahj Yoga*. The nine forms of *Bhakti* or devotion highlighted for the seeker by Guru Sahab are:

- Listening (*srawan*)- listening to the Name of the Lord,
- Music (*kirtan*)- music helps the mind to attune to the Guru's teachings,
- Remembrance (*sumiran*)- repetition of the Name of the Lord,
- Following in the footsteps of the master (*padsevan*),
- Service (*archan*),
- Singing praises of the Lord(*vandana*),
- Obedience (*dasbhav*),

- Friendship (*mitrata*) and
- Self-surrender (*atma nivedan*).

While Baba Farid believed in renunciation and physical penance on the spiritual path, Guru Sahab suggested that by leading the life of a householder and by fulfilling ones social duties man becomes free from the ties of the world and by inflicting pain on oneself the Grace of Lord may not be achieved. According to Narain Singh,

Man was indebted to society, in a hundred ways. In fact, he could not exist without it. To run away from the post of duty i.e. from the service of society, was the height of ingratitude, and life's debt could not be paid back in instalments. It was utterly selfish to think of one's own so-called salvation when society, of which one was a part, suffered, for want of right guidance. The light the Sheikh was vainly searching for in the forests was already in the heart. It was only to be illumined by the torch of God's Name. (Singh, 348)

Though a *Qissa* poet Waris Shah had strong Sufi leanings and belonged to the Chisti order of Sufism. Waris Shah's *Heer* metaphorically depicts the tormented journey of Heer's life which reflects the troublesome spiritual journey of the soul before it finally unites with the Lord.

A thematic analysis of the four poets reveals the mystic power of Love. Love is referred to by the names of *preet*, *ishq* and *hub*. While all four poets gave love a prominent place in their poetry, however there is a difference of emphasis. Love for Bulleh Shah has the supremacy over all spiritual knowledge, religious obligations and noble actions. Like other pantheistic Sufis he too promoted the idea that, "A man who does not have to his credit any noble action, but loves God, is sure to earn God's pleasure." (Sharda, 103) By depicting wifely devotion in his verses he depicted the suffering of separation from the Lord as similar to that of a bride separated from her beloved. The master-disciple relationship is essentially depicted through the imagery of a bride and her beloved in his verses. His *kafis* also reveal his personal experiences on the mystical path. As Bulleh Shah describes this:

In whose heart the Beloved abides,  
 He loudly proclaims, "Beloved, O Beloved!"  
 He needs neither a string nor a mode.  
 He revels in ecstasy of his own accord,  
 Whosoever is stung by perfect love. (Bulleh Shah, 331)

Baba Farid on the other hand being an *Ijadist* Sufi, believed that the love for God can be expressed in the form of strict adherence to the path shown by Him and abiding by His commandments. Asghar Ali Engineer points out, "To him (Sheikh Farid), the main purpose of man's creation was the love of the Supreme Being." (Engineer, np) Baba Farid has compared the situation of man to that of a *koel* which has turned black in its separation from the Lord and waits for the union with Him. He writes:

O black *Koel*, why have you turned black?"  
 (And She says) "I have burnt black to the Separation from my Spouse!"  
 Pray, how can one, without God, be at Peace?  
 (But), when the Lord is Merciful, He unites one with Himself. ||2|| (SGGS, 755)

Guru Nanak Dev Ji gave importance to the Guru and the development of love in the heart of the disciple. He states "Without the Guru, Love springs not; nor the Dirt of Ego goes." (SGGS, 57). Hence by repeating the Holy Name and listening to the Guru, one can achieve spiritual union with the Lord.

Love of Heer in *Heer* symbolises her devotion/ keenness to unite with the Lord. She herself stands for the seeker, Ranjha is the master and the struggles of Heer are the struggles of soul on the spiritual path. The heavenly union of Heer Ranjha symbolises the union of the soul with the Lord.

In the poems of Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah the process of spiritual journey is called '*unio mystica*' and it is divided into the stages of union, separation and re-union. The love in the works of Bulleh Shah is the love he feels for his master, Shah Inayat. It is with the teachings of

his master that Bullah could get an essence of Divine Knowledge. But later due to ignorance and disrespect towards his master, Shah Inayat disowned Bulleh Shah and deprived him of his company and his teachings. It is during this time of separation from his master that Bulleh Shah realized his short comings. He strove hard to regain the love of his Master. This period of separation from his master was dominated by the feelings of anxiety, sorrow and melancholy. But as he struggled and faced his short comings, his master granted him his acceptance. In this phase of his life we see Bulleh Shah's growth towards maturity and contentment and the faith that his master would guide him. Bulleh Shah shows the playfulness in the hearts of young lovers. Using the symbol of Heer from the love legend of *Heer Ranjha*, he depicts union as experienced by Heer in the *kafi*, *Ranjha Ranjha kardi ni main aape Ranjhija hui* "Merging in Ranjha" by remembering the beloved, the lover herself has become one with the beloved.

Ranjha is in me; I am in Ranjha.  
No other thought exists in my mind.  
I am not; He alone is.  
He Himself amuses Himself. (Bulleh Shah, 297)

In Waris Shah's *Heer* the spiritual journey of the soul is depicted through the relationship of Heer and Ranjha. The union of the two lovers is the state of innocence in which the soul experiences its first union with the Divine; it is innate in the soul. The separation of the two lovers is the separation that the soul experiences when it gets involved in the worldly pursuits of this life. It is when the soul struggles in separation that it realizes that it must move in the direction of spiritual upliftment with the help of a master who enlightens the soul. It is then that it enjoys in the bliss of re-union. As Idries Shah states, "You must empty out the dirty water before you fill the pitcher with clean." (Shah, Web) The struggles of Heer and Ranjha are the struggles of the soul on the spiritual journey back to its home. As Pankaj K. Singh highlights,

Waris Shah, who himself was "thoroughly nurtured in Sufism" and "was proud of his affiliation to the oldest Sufi order of the Punjab: the Chistia" also gives a

clear and sustained mystical dimension to Heer and Ranjha's love.... Waris literally states that Heer is the soul and Ranjha is the image and spells out allegorical meanings of other characters as well; in addition, there are repeated references in the narrative that place their love in the domain of spiritual devotion. (PK Singh, 50)

A comparison of the works of Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah also shows that the *kafis* of Bulleh Shah and the experiences of union, separation and re-union are his personal experiences. In Bulleh Shah's *kafis* the beloved is his master, Shah Inayat and the lover is Bullah. Union refers to his first meeting with his master, separation to the time he spends in repentance for his ignorance and re-union for regaining his master's guidance. Waris Shah makes use of the legend *Heer Ranjha* to show these stages of union, separation and re-union.

The spiritual journey or '*unio mystica*' has also been linked to the seven stages of the Sufi path of love given by John A. Subhan in the selected works of Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah. The Sufi passes through these seven stages and ultimately experiences union with the Lord. These seven stages are:

- *Ubudiyyat* or the stage of manhood
- *Ishq* or love
- *Zuhd* or renunciation
- *Marifat* or knowledge
- *Wajd* or ecstasy
- *Haqiqat* or reality
- *Wasi* or union

The seven stages are similar to the five *khands* given by Guru Nanak Dev Ji in the *Japji Sahib*.

The five *khands* are the five stages leading to the Ultimate Truth.

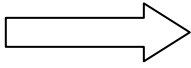
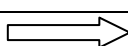
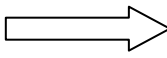
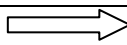
- *Dharam Khand* (Realm of Righteousness or Moral Living),
- *Gyan Khand* (Realm of Knowledge),
- *Saram Khand* (Realm of Spiritual Effort),
- *Karam Khand* (Realm of Grace), and

- *Sach Khand* (Realm of Truth or Eternity)

Through these stages Guru Nanak Dev, Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah depict the journey of the soul from the preliminary stages and ultimately its experience of the stage of union or the realm of eternity as the spiritual truth is revealed.

Table 11

Similarity Between the Seven Stages of Sufi's life and Five *Khands* given by Guru Nanak Dev Ji

<i>Ubudiyyat</i> <i>Ishq</i> <i>Zuhd</i>		<i>Dharam Khand</i>
<i>Marifat</i>		<i>Gyan Khand</i>
<i>Wajd</i> <i>Haqiqat</i>		<i>Saram Khand</i> <i>Karam Khannd</i>
<i>Wasi</i>		<i>Sach Khand</i>

The mystic poets of Punjab made use of the symbols from nature and its surroundings to narrate their experiences. The village scenes of Punjab, the different seasons, the daily chores in the household, the womenfolk of Punjab, activities of the farm and farming and the cattle were some of the prominent symbols used by the poets to share their ideas. Through symbols the poets also highlighted the hypocrisy of the religious men and the troubled times.

The study of the symbols in the works of the four poets separately and collectively helps in the understanding of the message they conveyed to the readers. In Baba Farid's verses the images of the "humble grave", the "angel of death" and "Satan" are prominent as they depict death. The idea of death has been highlighted because the poet at every stage warns that one should not lose the connection with the Lord. Old age or death may strike before any spiritual realization takes place. Righteousness, sweet speech and the practise of poverty are some of the virtues highlighted by Baba Farid as essential on the spiritual path.

Table 12

## Important Symbols in the Hymns of Baba Farid

<i><b>Symbols</b></i>	<i><b>Meaning</b></i>
Bride	Life
Groom, Angel of Death	Death
Wedding Day	Day of Death
Straw	Humility
Satan	Temptations
<i>Pul Sirat</i>	Bridge of Hell
Crane, Crow	Hypocrite Saints
Koel	Soul
Black colour of Koel	The time spend in remembering the Lord
Firewood for cooking	Head which doesn't pray to the Lord
Bow and Arrow	Patience on Spiritual Path
Sleep	Ignorance, Slumber

The spiritual message in the verses of Guru Nanak Dev Ji is reflected through a variety of symbols. He makes use of the symbols of sky for God, 'Simmal-tree' for humility which is essential for virtuous conduct. He makes use of the symbol of gold mine to show that with virtue man can realize the True Lord within. He also makes use of the symbols of farm and farmer, to show that when one sows the seed of the Name then the crop of devotion can be harvested.

Table 13

## Prominent Symbols in the Hymns of Guru Nanak Dev

<i><b>Symbols</b></i>		<i><b>Meaning</b></i>
Farm	Farmer	Mind
	Farming	Good Deeds
	Farm	Body
	Irrigate	Efforts
	Seeds	Lord's Name
	Furrowing	Contentment
	Fence	Humility
Temple, House, Palace		Body
<i>Gurmukh</i>		Abides by the Name
<i>Manmukh</i>		Self centred; Makes a false prattle of Love for the Lord
<i>Kaliyuga</i> , Kaliage		Troubles of the time
Kings, butchers, dogs,		Rulers of his contemporary times; Mughal emperors



tyrants	
Stage, Drama	Life
Five evils	<i>Kaam</i> (Lust), <i>Krodh</i> (Anger), <i>Lobh</i> (Greed), <i>Moh</i> (Emotional Attachment), <i>Ahankar</i> (Ego)
Maya; Net	Hides the spiritual truth
Forest, Woods	Attractions of the world
<i>Chakvi</i> , <i>Chatrik</i>	Lover of the Lord
Anahaad <i>Naad</i>	Repetition of name
<i>Ek Oankar</i>	The One, Lord

Guru Sahab makes use of analogy and comparison in his verses. The yearning of the human soul is compared to that of the *Chakvi* bird which spends sleepless nights yearning for the light of the sun. He also makes use of a number of symbols from daily life and from nature. Guru Sahab makes use of the symbol of ‘forest’ to suggest that one should not go out searching for various attractions in the ‘woods’ when all pleasures lie within oneself. Hence a seeker should prevent himself from getting swayed from the spiritual path. Virtues act as a guiding light for the seeker. Guru Sahab’s long hymns like the *Japji Sahib*, *Dakhni Oankar* and others depict the process of enlightenment that Guru Sahab preached. He emphasises the importance of the “Supreme will” or *Hukam* of the Lord.

Bulleh Shah’s poems are short and precise and portray the emotion of love, through a number of symbols. He mostly writes his verses in a female persona. The love legends of *Yusuf Zulaikha*, *Heer Ranjha*, *Sassi Punnu*, *Laila Majnu* as symbols bring out the relationship of a disciple and master. The lover (the yearning one) is the disciple and the beloved is the master (the yearned for).

Table 14

## Major Symbols in the Poems of Bulleh Shah

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Spinning wheel	Meditation
Flute	the body
Young girl	the soul

<i>Qazi</i> and mullahs	religious obligations
Dance	the experience of ecstasy
Colours	Teachings of the Guru
Auspicious Day	The day Guru enlightens the Disciple, the disciple's love for the Guru
Veil	The time when Guru is away from the disciple
Net	Illusion
Sleep	Ignorance

Waris Shah popularized the genre of *Qissa* Poetry. In the *Qissa* of *Heer*, Heer stands for the soul/seeker, Ranjha for the master/guide, society, family, *qazis*, and rituals represent the hindrances and attachments of the world. Heer's marriage symbolizes for the phase of separation and struggle on the spiritual path and celestial union of Heer-Ranjha shows the union of the soul with the Lord. The division of the epic into cantos not only shows the development of the plot of the epic but also reflects the spiritual journey. As the epic tells the tragic story of the young lovers Heer and Ranjha the title of each canto is symbolic of their journey on the path of love. The cantos are titled as:

Canto One: Love

Canto Two: Marriage and Reclusion

Canto Three: Marriage and Reclusion

Canto Four: Pursuit

Canto Five: Fulfilment

Canto Six: Disillusionment

Waris Shah's heroine Heer is not a traditional woman, who is ready to be pulled down by the rituals of society. She is outspoken and strong. She goes against the wishes of her family. She is not cowed down by the rules and regulations imposed by the village *Qazis* and *Mullahs*. She very strongly states that the *Qazis* could influence her family but they cannot sway her from her love for Ranjha. She shows her contempt for the harsh dictates of the *Qazis* as she believes

that they fool the innocent people. She points out that the *qazis* are more corrupt in their ways than common people.

Quick was Heer's answer- "Oh you fraud!  
On liars be the curse of God!  
False are your words and full of hate;  
Angels of God repudiate  
Imposters and heretics vile.  
Lovers alone appreciate  
The worth of lovers; the servile  
And uninitiated host  
Of Kazis beat the air and boast  
In vain. (Dar, 70)

The four poets share similarities in the way they make use of the setting of Punjab, its countryside, lifestyle and people as the backdrop of their writings.

Table 15

Common Symbols used by the Four Poets

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
The One	The Lord
Man	Soul, mind or ego
Ferryman or boatman	Master
Bride/ Heer/ wife	Soul
Groom/ beloved/ Ranjha	The Lord or the Master
Relationships	Attachments of the material world
Unstruck melody	Repetition of the Holy Name
Nectar name	Holy Name of the Lord
Ladder	the Guru who takes us to the Lord
Takht Hazara or Sach Khand	Abode of the Lord or Realm of Eternity
Swan/ <i>jogi</i>	Holy person

The *Baramaha* or song of the twelve months, is one of the styles of folk poetry which was introduced by Guru Nanak Dev and followed by Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah. Though Baba Farid mentions of three months (*Kartik, Shravan, Chaitra*) to show the passage of time in his verses. The impact of the seasons is shown over the tortured minds of the female (the soul or

the bride). The *Baramaha* narrates the condition of the soul separated from the Almighty. The soul sees itself as a separate entity and therefore has doubts about the union. But as time passes and persistent efforts enlighten the soul, it is able to achieve the sweet taste of union with the Lord. In Waris Shah's *Baramaha*- the pitiable condition of Heer is presented to the readers as throughout she cries and yearns for Ranjha. She gets no relief as her Ranjha is far away. Each passing month then reflects the spiritual agony of the soul which is desperate to be united with the Divine. J. R Puri and T. Shangari describe *Baramaha* as:

The love-sick soul sends messages to her Beloved. She bewails and expresses hurt feelings about His attitude of indifference and neglect. The *entire Bara Maha* describes the state of being separated from the Lord. In the last two months, when the soul finally meets the Lord, even though it took an entire lifetime of painful wailing, she is now in eternal bliss. (Puri, 443)

Table 16

An Analysis of the *Baramaha* in the works of the Four Poets:

	<i>Baba Farid</i>	<i>Guru Nanak Dev</i>	<i>Bulleh Shah</i>	<i>Waris Shah</i>
Depiction	Three months ( <i>Kartik, Shravan, Chaitra</i> )	Shows the journey of the soul with each passing month	Shows the journey of the soul with each passing month	Shows the sorrow of Heer in separation
Pattern	-	Cyclical	Cyclical	Linear
Condition of the Soul	-	Change in the condition of the bride	Change in the condition of the lover	No change in the condition of Heer
Months	<i>Kartik, Shravan, Chaitra</i>	<i>Chet to Phaggan</i>	<i>Assu to Bhaddon</i>	<i>Sawan to Har</i>

In a literary and stylistic study of the works of the four poets it is also essential to comment on the techniques used by each to convey their ideas to the readers. The language used

by the four poets is Punjabi. In their poetic works, Baba Farid, Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah made use of some Persian and Arabic words. The script they chose to write in was Arabic but the language was of the local areas of Punjab. This script was known as *Shahmukhi*. Later Guru Nanak Dev Ji invented the thirty five letters of the *Gurmukhi* script which were modified and later used by Guru Arjun Dev in the writing of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. As has been pointed out, Guru Sahab travelled throughout the country mostly on foot. He made use of the Sanskrit language called *Sahaskrit* in some of his verses. He also used Persian in many places and also made use of the *Sant bhasha* for the people who did not understand Punjabi. But most of his verses are in *Lehendi* as it was the standard dialect of Punjab at the time. The translators of the texts have used a simple language to convey a great spiritual message to the readers.

The metre and versification of the four writers vary in their verses. There are 134 hymns of Baba Farid found in three different sections of the Holy *Granth*. The two *shabads* in the *Raag Asa* comprise two couplets and have four and eight stanzas respectively. The two *shabads* in the *Raag Suhi* are in quatrains. The *shalokas* in the *Raag Jaijavanti* are of different lengths as they are his commentaries on different issues.

There are 974 hymns of Guru Nanak Dev in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, which also consist of his long *banis* like the *Japji Sahib*, *Sidh Goshth*, *Dakhni Oankar*, *Patti Likhi* and also of a number of *ashtapadis*, *chaupadas*, *shalokas* and also *vars*. His composition of *Sidh Goshth* is in the form of question and answer as during one of his travels he came across a group of ascetics and being curious about their spiritual practices, Guru Sahab got involved in discussions on human existence, the meaning of life, spiritual growth, etc. with the priests. The hymns are also arranged according to the emotions a *raga* depicts.

The Emotions Conveyed through the *Ragas* used by Baba Farid and Guru Sahab

<b>Name of the Raga</b>	<b>Prominent Emotion of the Raga</b>
<i>Japji</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of following the ways of the Lord</li> <li>• To understand the <i>Hukam</i> of the Lord</li> <li>• Ways to reach the ultimate home of the Lord</li> </ul>
<i>Sri Raag</i>	Maya and detachment
<i>Raga Majh</i>	Yearning to merge with lord, Giving up negative values
<i>Raga Gauri</i>	Principled life, seriousness on the path of Lord, calm and composed nature
<i>Raga Asa</i>	Hope
<i>Raga Gujri</i>	Prayer of the Lord
<i>Raga Vadhans</i>	<i>Vairaag</i> (Detachment)
<i>Raga Sorath</i>	Praise of the Lord
<i>Raga Tilang</i>	Sadness of separation
<i>Raga Suhi</i>	Being away from the home of the Lord a feeling of sadness in the soul.
<i>Raga Bilawal</i>	Beautification of the soul, a feeling of happiness
<i>Raga Ramkali</i>	To give up the life of a wandering Jogi
<i>Raga Maru</i>	Bravery, fight against evil
<i>Raga Tukhari</i>	Separation and union with Lord
<i>Raga Bhairo</i>	Man's state in hell
<i>Raga Basant</i>	Happiness
<i>Raga Sarang</i>	Thirst to meet God
<i>Raga Malaar</i>	State of separated and united soul
<i>Raga Parbhathi</i>	<i>Bhakti</i> (Devotion of Lord)
<i>Raag Jaijavanti</i>	<i>Vairaag</i> (Detachment)

Bulleh Shah's verses are in the form of a number of *kafis*, *dohras*, *athavaras* which are to be sung to the accompaniment of music. These include around 138 *Kafis*, a composition of *Baramaha* containing verses for each month of the year and these are twelve in number. A composition of *Atthvara* contains a verse for each day of the week and these are eight in number. There are also some miscellaneous short verses under the titles of *Gandhan*, *Dohre* and *Siharfi*.

The cantos in Waris Shah's *Heer*, have a number of sections. Each section is of different length. Waris Shah in his original text has made use of the classical *dohara* metre, with the rhyme scheme ab-ab-cd-cd and so on. The epic begins with an invocation to the Takht Hazara which is regarded as the abode of the Lord.

Music forms an integral part of the Punjabi poetry. As the poets travelled from place to place, they sang in leisure and to share their message with the public. Guru Nanak called himself a *dhadhi* (the one who sings with an instrument) and with Mardana he used to travel and sing to spread his message of love for the Lord. The *bani* of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, except for the *Japji Sahib* and *so-dar* the rest of the *banis* of the Gurus as well as the *Bhagats* are set to thirty one *ragas*. The *ragas* are time specific and the hymns are to be sung at a particular time of the day. The *ragas* are divided into sections as for example *Raag Asa Mahala 1*, which shows the hymns of Guru Nanak Dev in the *Raag Asa* of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

Bulleh Shah's poems are mostly *kafis* which were sung and the first or sometimes even the second line of his *kafis* act like a refrain. The repetition of the lines forms a continuous beat when his *kafis* are sung. Waris Shah's *Heer* is arranged in such a manner that words when read create music of their own. The tone of the *Qissa* is jubilant when the lovers meet. It becomes morose and serious when it shares the sorrows and struggles of the separated lovers.

The works of the selected poets reflect their religious and spiritual temperament. Their devotion instilled the generations after them with the Love for the Lord. Also because of the artistry of their verses, these works are able to give utmost delight to the readers. They reveal the process through which we can be united with the Supreme Lord and make us conscious of the life that lies in the beyond. The works suggest that by the repetition of the Name, by loving the Guru and by performing good deeds, the soul becomes attuned to its source and eventually reaches its final destination. The analysis of the selected works, on the basis of "Mystical Symbolism" makes the understanding of the mystical experiences of the four poets easier for the readers. The examination of the meanings attached to the symbols used in these verses show the process of spiritual awakening.

Like a canopy, early Punjabi literature covers a number of genres. It is the outcome of numerous influences and cultures reflecting multicultural and multilingual characteristics. "Poetry comes like an inborn gift to the Punjabi child. Maybe it is the soil, maybe it is the salubrious waters of the rivers, maybe it is the neighbourhood of the lofty mountains, it is the Punjabi youth's unique experience to feel an exhilaration, which finds expression in the rhythmic pattern of language sung and repeated as folk-songs." (SS Singh, 10)



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